Cornelius W. T. Wilson

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LIFE THOUGHTS,

GATHERED FROM THE EXTEMPORANEOUS DISCOURSES

OF

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BY

EDNA DEAN PROCTER AND A. MOORE.

FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.

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Mr. Cornelius W. J. Wilson

PREFACE TO FIRST SERIES.

SOME two years since, while visiting friends in a distant city, they proposed that I should take notes for them of Mr. Beecher's sermons. Upon my return I commenced doing so, without a thought of their going beyond the little circle for whom they were first intended. But, as page after page was added to my note-book, and read occasionally to one and another, it began to be suggested that they ought not to be confined to the few, but should be published in a volume and given to the many. Thus the present book came into being.

With rare exceptions, these notes have been taken from the Sabbath sermons and Wednesday evening lectures, since the date at which they were commenced. Most of them have never been written till now; for Mr. Beecher's best thoughts are not usually those which are beforehand committed coolly to paper; they are those which spring from the inspiration of the moment, and have no record save in the memory of his hearers. To gather up and preserve some of the treasures thus lavishly scattered, has been the aim of this volume. It is not given to the world

as the full-boughed tree; but only as some of the leaves which have fallen from it through two successive seasons.

To Robert D. Benedict, Esq., of Brooklyn, whose own notes, taken during the same time, were placed at my disposal, I desire to express my cordial thanks.

E. D. PROCTER.

Brooklyn, N. Y., *April*, 1858.

LIFE THOUGHTS

First Series.

LIFE THOUGHTS.

NOW abideth these three: Faith, by which we see the glories of the eternal sphere; Hope, by which we mount towards them; and Love, by which we grasp and inherit them—therefore the greatest of these is Love.

Love, amid the other graces in this world, is like a cathedral tower, which begins on the earth, and, at first, is surrounded by the other parts of the structure. But, at length, rising above buttressed wall, and arch, and parapet, and pinnacle, it shoots spire-like many a foot right into the air, so high that the huge cross on its summit glows like a spark in the morning light, and shines like a star in the evening sky, when the rest of the pile is enveloped in darkness. So Love, here, is surrounded by the other graces, and divides the honours with them; but they will have felt the wrap of night and of darkness when *it* will shine, luminous, against the sky of eternity.

MANY men want wealth—not a competence alone, but a *five-storey competence.* Everything subserves this; and religion they would like as a sort of lightning-rod to their houses, to ward off, by and by, the bolts of divine wrath.

THE way to begin a Christian life is not to study theology. Piety before theology. Right living will produce right thinking. Yet many men, when their consciences are aroused, run for catechisms, and commentaries, and systems. They do not mean to be shallow Christians. They intend to be thorough, if they enter upon the Christian life at all. Now, theologies are well in their place; but repentance and love must come before all other experiences. First a cure for your sin-sick soul, and then theologies. Suppose a man were taken with the cholera, and, instead of sending for a physi-

cian, he should send to a book store, and buy all the books which have been written on the human system, and, while the disease was working in his vitals, he should say, "I'll not put myself in the hands of any of these doctors. I shall probe this thing to the bottom."

Would it not be better for him first to be cured of the cholera?

The Bible is the most betrashed book in the world. Coming to it through commentaries is much like looking at a landscape through garret windows, over which generations of unmolested spiders have spun their webs.

Our real commentators are our strongest traits of character; and we usually come out of the Bible with all those texts sticking to us which our idiosyncrasies attract.

If one should send me from abroad a richly-carved and precious statue, and the careless drayman who tipped it upon the side-walk before my door should give it such a blow that one of the boards of the box should be wrenched off, I should be frightened lest the hurt had penetrated farther, and wounded it within. But if, taking off the remaining boards, and the swathing-bands of straw or cotton, the statue should come out fair and unharmed, I should not mind the box, but should cast it carelessly into the street.

Now, every man has committed to him a statue, moulded by the oldest master, not of Cupid, or Venus, or Psyche, or Jupiter, or Apollo, but the image of God; and he who is only solicitous for outward things, who is striving to protect merely the body from injuries and reverses, is letting the statue go rolling away into the gutter, while he is picking up the fragments, and lamenting the ruin of the box.

A week filled up with selfishness, and the Sabbath stuffed full of religious exercises, will make a good Pharisee, but a poor Christian. There are many persons who think Sunday is a sponge with which to wipe out the sins of the week. Now, God's altar stands from Sunday to Sunday, and the seventh day is no more for religion than any other. It is for rest. The whole seven are for religion, and one of them for rest.

All things in the natural world symbolize God, yet none of them speak of Him but in broken and imperfect words.

High above all He sits, sublimer than mountains, grander than storms, sweeter than blossoms and tender fruits, nobler than lords, truer than parents, more loving than lovers. His feet tread the lowest places of the earth; but His head is above all glory, and everywhere He is supreme.

You might as well go to the catacombs of Egypt, and scrape up the dust of the mummies, and knead it into forms, and bake them in your oven, and call such things men, and present them, as citizens and teachers, for our regard, as to bring old, time-worn institutions to serve the growth and the living wants of to-day.

* What cares the child when the mother rocks it, though all storms beat without? So we, if God doth shield and tend us, shall be heedless of the tempests and blasts of life, blow they never so rudely.

Every man feels, and not strangely, that there never were such experiences of life as his own. No joy was ever like our joy, no sorrow ever like our sorrow. Indeed, there is a kind of indignation excited in us when one likens our grief to his own. The soul is jealous of its experiences, and does not like pride to be humbled by the thought that they are *common*. For, though we know that the world groans and travails in pain, and has done so for ages, yet a groan heard by our ear is a very different thing from a groan uttered by our mouth. The sorrows of other men seem to us like clouds of rain that empty themselves in the distance, and whose long-travelling thunder comes to us mellowed and subdued; but our own troubles are like a storm bursting right overhead, and sending down its bolts upon us with direct plunge.

But there have been human hearts, constituted just like ours, for six thousand years. The same stars rise and set upon this globe that rose upon the plains of Shinar, or along the Egyptian Nile; and the same sorrows rise and set in every age. All that sickness can do, all that disappointment can effect, all that blighted love, disappointed ambition, thwarted hope, ever did, they do still. Not a tear is wrung from eyes now, that, for the same reason, has not been wept over and over again in long succession since the hour that the fated pair stepped from Paradise, and gave their posterity

* In church, one rainy Sabbath morning.

to a world of sorrow and suffering. The head learns new things, but the heart for evermore practises old experiences. Therefore our life is but a new form of the way men have lived from the beginning.

When the landsman first goes down upon the deep, to see what storm-ploughing means, what furrows the wind draws, seedless and unplanted, he feels in every shivering nerve that never was such storm known before. Now, he bethinks himself with horror, there has come upon the deep a fury never till then let loose. But the clouds laugh, and the winds know, that ten thousand times before they have terrified just such inexperienced wretches. Yea, long ere a ship dared the central ocean, storms had navigated it, nor failed to pursue their dreadful sport ever since a keel crossed the perilous deep.

Not only are such experiences the hereditary legacy of men, rolled over and over, and sent down in succession upon every generation, but the methods by which men have met and conquered trouble, or been slain by it, are the same in every age. Some have floated on the sea, and trouble carried them on its surface as the sea carries cork. Some have sunk at once to the bottom as foundering ships sink. Some have run away from their own thoughts. Some have coiled themselves up into a stoical indifference. Some have braved the trouble, and defied it. Some have carried it as a tree does a wound, until by new wood it can overgrow and cover the old gash. A few in every age have known the divine art of carrying sorrow and trouble as wonderful food; as an invisible garment that clothed them with strength; as a mysterious joy, so that they suffered gladly, rejoicing in infirmity, and, holding up their heads with sacred presages whenever times were dark and troublous, let the light depart from their eyes, that they might by faith see nobler things than sight could reach.

The most affecting records of literature are those which repeat to us the sacred joy of souls in trial—their victory, and the causes of it. Job says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Moses "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Isaiah had sounded forth, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord,

and the excellency of our God. . . . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

David has left no sweeter psalm than the short twenty-third. It is but a moment's opening of his soul; but, as when one, walking the winter street, sees the door opened for some one to enter, and the red light streams a moment forth, and the forms of gay children are running to greet the comer, and genial music sounds, though the door shuts and leaves the night black, yet it cannot shut back again all that the eye, the ear, the heart, and the imagination have seen—so in this psalm, though it is but a moment's opening of the soul, are emitted truths of peace and consolation that will never be absent from the world.

The twenty-third psalm is the nightingale of the psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but, oh! it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy, greater than the heart can conceive. Blessed be the day on which that psalm was born!

What would you say of a pilgrim commissioned of God to travel up and down the earth singing a strange melody, which, when one heard, caused him to forget whatever sorrow he had? And so the singing angel goes on his way through all lands, singing in the language of every nation, driving away trouble by the pulses of the air which his tongue moves with divine power. Behold just such an one! This pilgrim God has sent to speak in every language on the globe. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illumined; it has visited the prisoner and broken his chains, and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go too. Nor

is its work done. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God, whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever.

Oh impatient ones! Did the leaves say nothing to you as they murmured, when you came hither to-day? They were not created this spring, but months ago; and the summer just begun will fashion others for another year. At the bottom of every leaf stem is a cradle, and in it is an infant germ; and the winds will rock it, and the birds will sing to it all summer long, and next season it will unfold. So God is working for you, and carrying forward to the perfect development all the processes of your lives.

You have seen a ship out on the bay, swinging with the tide, and seeming as if it would follow it, and yet it cannot, for down beneath the water it is anchored. So many a soul sways towards heaven, but cannot ascend thither, because it is anchored to some secret sin.

Men, in their property, are afraid of conflagrations and lightning strokes; but if they were building a wharf in Panama, a million madrepores, so small that only the microscope could detect them, would begin to bore the piles down under the water. There would be neither noise nor foam; but in a little while, if a child did but touch the post, over it would fall as if a saw had cut it through.

Now, men think, with regard to their conduct, that if they were to lift themselves up gigantically and commit some crashing sin, they should never be able to hold up their heads; but they will harbour in their souls little sins, which are piercing and eating them away to inevitable ruin.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

This is only one meaning of religion. If I should say of a garden, "It is a place fenced in," what idea would you have of its clusters of roses, and pyramids of honeysuckles, and beds of odorous flowers, and rows of blossoming shrubs and fruit-bearing trees? If I should say of a cathedral, "It

is built of stone, cold stone," what idea would you have of its wondrous carvings, and its gorgeous openings for door and window, and its evanishing spire? Now, if you regard religion merely as self-denial, you stop at the fence, and see nothing of the pleasantness of the garden; you think only of the stone, and not of the marvellous beauty into which it is fashioned.

One might as well attempt to calculate mathematically the contingent forms of the tinkling bits of glass in a kaleidoscope as to look through the tube of the future and foretell its pattern.

We sleep, but the loom of life never stops; and the pattern which was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up to-morrow.

Men who neglect Christ, and try to win heaven through moralities, are like sailors at sea in a storm, who pull, some at the bowsprit and some at the mainmast, but never touch the helm.

Our best actions are often those of which we are unconscious; but this can never be unless we are always yearning to do good.

In my garden at the West, I used sometimes to notice that the finest heads of lettuce were not in the beds, but on some southern ridge, where they had chanced to grow. It seemed as though random seeds always did the best, from a kind of wild emulation; but they never grew without the sowing, and the chance-sown seed was never wild.

If you shake the tree, you can bring down fruit, no doubt; but I remember, when a boy, the persuasion to get early out of bed was the thought of the large white apples that lay beneath the trees, awaiting the first comer—that had dropped upon the grass in the silent night, almost without a breath of wind to stir the branches. Now, I think every man ought to carry his boughs so full of fruits, that, like the apples which drop from silent dew, they will fall by the weight of their own ripeness for whoever needs to be refreshed. We should go home to the thrashing-floor like a great harvest waggon full of sheaves, which at every jolt casts down ears for the gleaners, and stray seeds for the birds, and now and then a chance handful, which, blown by

winds into nooks and corners, comes up to grow, and to bless another generation.

He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten its cause.

When I was in the galleries of Oxford, I saw many of the designs of Raphael and Michael Angelo. I looked upon them with reverence, and took up such of them as I was permitted to touch as one would take up a love token. It seemed to me these sketches brought me nearer the great masters than their finished pictures could have done, because therein I saw the minds' processes as they were first born. They were the first salient points of the inspiration. Could I have brought them home with me, how rich I should have been! how envied for their possession! Now, there are open and free to us, every day of our lives, the designs of a greater than Raphael or Michael Angelo. God, of whom the noblest master is but a feeble imitator, is sketching and painting every hour the most wondrous pictures—not hoarded in any gallery, but spread in light and shadow round the whole earth, and glowing for us in the overhanging skies.

What if the parent bird should sit, nervous and fluttering, upon the bough, when the young ones were hatching, and mourn because its beautiful egg-shells were being broken?

Yet this is what we do. We have joys and truths deep as eternity, committed to us in the egg form, and the shell must needs be chipped before they can be born, and fly, full-fledged, singing, towards the gate of heaven. Yet we grieve and fear, and cling still to the undeveloped egg.

If a man is odious in society, he might as well be in prison. The worst prisons are not of stone. They are of throbbing hearts, outraged by an infamous life.

There are many people in this world who are like perfumed vases from which the perfume has fled, all the surrounding objects attracting it; and so their life is not in *themselves*, but in their *things*.

It is often said it is no matter what a man believes if he

is only sincere. This is true of all minor truths, and false of all truths whose nature it is to fashion a man's life. It will make no difference in a man's harvest whether he think turnips have more saccharine matter than potatoes—whether corn is better than wheat. But let the man sincerely believe that seed planted without ploughing is as good as with, that January is as favourable for seed sowing as April, and that cockle seed will produce as good a harvest as wheat, and will it make no difference? A child might as well think he could reverse that ponderous marine engine which, night and day, in calm and storm, ploughs its way across the deep, by sincerely taking hold of the paddle-wheel, as a man might think he could reverse the action of the elements of God's moral government through a misguided sincerity. They will roll over such an one, and whelm him in endless ruin.

They are not reformers who simply abhor evil. Such men become in the end abhorrent themselves.

Sometimes men who have been frankly wicked attempt to reform, and become locked-up hypocrites.

One man's heart beating against yours may be little to you; but when it is the echo of a thousand hearts, you cannot resist it. A single snow-flake,—who cares for it? But a whole day of snow-flakes, obliterating the landmarks, drifting over the doors, gathering upon the mountains to crash in avalanches,—who does not care for that? Private opinion is weak, but public opinion is almost omnipotent.

Some men are like pyramids, which are very broad where they touch the ground, but grow narrower as they reach the sky.

People say, "How fortunate it is that things have turned out just as they have—that I was prepared for this!" As if God did not arrange the whole! One might as well say, "How fortunate it is that I have a neck beneath my head, and shoulders under my neck!"

No man need fear that he will exhaust his substance of thought, if he will only draw his inspiration from actual human life. There the inexhaustible God pours depth and endless variety of truth; and the true thinker is but a short-hand writer endeavouring to report the discourse of God.

Shall a child on the banks of the Amazon fear lest he should drink up the stream?

THERE are apartments in the soul which have a glorious out-look; from whose windows you can see across the river of death, and into the shining city beyond; but how often are these neglected for the lower ones, which have earthward-looking windows! There is the apartment of Veneration. Its ceilings are frescoed with angels, and all exquisite carvings adorn its walls; but spiders have covered the angel ceiling, and dust has settled on the delicate mouldings. The man does not abide there. The door of Conscience is rusted so it cannot be opened. Hope has but one downward-looking window, and Faith and Worship are cold and cheerless. All these are shut up in most soul-houses. In lower apartments you shall hear, in some riot and wassail,—for the passions never keep Lent, but are always holding Carnival,—and in others sighs and lamentations of wounded hopes, and in others the groanings of disappointed ambition, and in others bickerings and strifes, while in others there are sleep and stupidity.

Ah! most men live in these wretched apartments, and never mount to those airy ones where they can hold commerce with God and angels. Now Christ comes to light up the house from foundation to roof-tree with the glory of God. He knocks at the door, and, when it is opened to him he enters, and gives to every room order, and beauty, and the voice of song, and a wondrous fragrance from his robes, which have borrowed smell of every flower that grows in the celestial gardens. Who will open the door?

IN this world it is not what we *take* up, but what we *give* up, that makes us rich.

WHEN a man unites with the Church, he should not come saying, "I am so holy that I think I must go in among the saints;" but, "O brethren, I find I am so weak and wicked that I cannot stand alone; so, if you can help me, open the door and let me enter."

AMID the discords of this life, it is blessed to think of heaven, where God draws after him an everlasting train of music; for all thoughts are harmonious and all feelings vocal, and so there is round about his feet eternal melody.

Many of our churches defy Protestantism. Grand cathedrals are they, which make us shiver as we enter them. The windows are so constructed as to exclude the light and inspire a religious awe. The walls are of stone, making us think of our last home. The ceilings are sombre, and the pews coffin-coloured. Then the services are composed to these circumstances, and hushed music goes trembling along the aisles, and men move softly, and would on no account put on their hats before they reach the door; but when they do, they take a long breath, and have such a sense of relief to be in the free air, and comfort themselves with the thought that they have been good Christians!

Now, this idea of worship is narrow and false. The house of God should be a joyous place for the right use of all our faculties.

I had rather see a congregation laugh, when it is a sign of life in them, than to see them asleep under, appropriately called, sound sermons.

A lie always needs a truth for a handle to it, else the hand would cut itself which sought to drive it home upon another. The worst lies, therefore, are those whose blade is false, but whose handle is true.

Those who exalt sentimental religion, and ignore practical, ethical life, are like men who would improve ship architecture by cutting away the hull till it is no larger than a shingle, and spreading the sails till they are as big as the whole harbour. Every leaf must have a root which goes deep into the ground, and every sentimental blossom must have an ethical support.

In this world, full often, our joys are only the tender shadows which our sorrows cast.

The cares and infelicities of life, which are spoken of as "hindrances to grace," may be hindrances, but they are the only helps it has in this world. The voice of provocation is the voice of God calling us to the practice of patience.

A man in old age is like a sword in a shop window. Men that look upon the perfect blade do not imagine the process by which it was completed. Man is a sword. Daily life is the workshop, and God is the artificer, and those cares which

beat upon the anvil, and file his edge, and eat in, acid-like, the inscription upon his hilt,—these are the very things that fashion the man.

THE call to religion is not a call to be better than your fellows, but to be better than yourself. Religion is relative to the individual.

MANY professing Christians are like railroad station-houses, and the wicked are whirled indifferently by them, and go on their way forgetting them; whereas they should be like switches, taking sinners off one track, and putting them on to another.

THERE ought to be such an atmosphere in every Christian church, that a man going there and sitting two hours should take the contagion of heaven, and carry home a fire to kindle the altar whence he came.

MANY persons come to the right point in conversion, but they never shove off. I question them about their state, and I find all as it should be; but they are waiting for something, they know not what—standing still in thought and feeling.

If you wind up the weights of a clock, and point the hands to the proper figures, and go away, you will find them in the same place when you return an hour after. Set it again, and an hour later it will be as you left it. What does it need? It needs to have the pendulum swing, and then it will keep time. Now, I am continually setting Christians; and when I look again, I find them just where I left them. What all such need is to swing the pendulum of active duties, and life expression of thoughts and feelings. Your hearts must be always ticking, if you would have them keep time with the Sun of Righteousness.

A MAN will confess sins in general; but those sins which he would not have his neighbour know for his right hand, which bow him down with shame like a wind-stricken bulrush, those he passes over in his prayer. Men are willing to be thought sinful in *disposition;* but in special *acts* they are disposed to praise themselves. They therefore confess their depravity, and defend their conduct. They are wrong in general, but right in particular.

I THINK the wickedest people on earth are those who use a force of genius to make themselves selfish in the noblest things; keeping themselves aloof from the vulgar, and the ignorant, and the unknown; rising higher and higher in taste, till they sit, ice upon ice, on the mountain top of eternal congelation.

Now, as we ascend the hills of improvement, those who are poor and needy are not to hear our voices chanting ever farther and farther in the distance. No! by our singing we are to win others upward to the same heights to which we aspire.

THE superfluous blossoms on a fruit-tree are meant to symbolize the large way in which God loves to do pleasant things.

WHEN my blood flows like wine, when all is ease and prosperity, when the sky is blue, and birds sing, and flowers blossom, and my life is an anthem moving in time and tune, then this world's joy and affection suffice. But when a change comes, when I am weary and disappointed, when the skies lower into the sombre night, when there is no song of bird, and the perfume of flowers is but their dying breath, when all is sunsetting and autumn, then I yearn for Him who sits with the summer of love in His soul, and feel that all earthly affection is but a glow-worm light, compared to that which blazes with such effulgence in the heart of God.

I THINK half the troubles for which men go slouching in prayer to God are caused by their intolerable pride. Many of our cares are but a morbid way of looking at our privileges. We let our blessings get mouldy, and then call them curses.

IF you wish to look at a portrait of Raphael's, what would you think to see only the forehead uncovered, and then only the eyes, and so on, until all the features had been separately seen? Could you gain a true idea of the picture as a whole? Yet this is the way men look at the picture of Christ in the Gospels, reading a few verses and mottoes here and there, and never considering the life in its wholeness and harmony.

YOU are to accept as a Christian every one whose life

and disposition are Christ-like, no matter how heretical the denomination may be to which he belongs.

WHEREVER you find faith, and righteousness, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, you are to look upon them as the stamped coin of Christ's kingdom, and as a legal tender from God to you.

I HAVE heard men teach that God has a right to glorify Himself, and to appropriate everything to His own delight—a doctrine which is shocking, and which represents Him as living in almighty selfishness. Can we believe that He sits, self-poised, in eternity, admiring His own perfections and singing his own joys, when, against this, with regard to man, the whole Bible fulminates?

IT is neither the vote nor the laying on of hands that gives men the right to preach. One's own heart is authority. If one wishes to, and can, let him, though all Church courts forbid. If he cannot preach to edification, he is not authorized, though all the ministers in Christendom ordain him. Any one who has a bell in him, that, ringing, will ring with "Holiness to the Lord," is a preacher.

ASTRONOMERS have built telescopes which can show myriads of stars unseen before; but when a man looks through a tear in his own eye, that is a lens which opens reaches in the unknown, and reveals orbs which no telescope, however skilfully constructed, could do; nay, which brings to view even the throne of God, and pierces the nebulous distance where are those eternal verities in which true life consists.

WHEN the Church is cold and dead, those hymns which were written by God's saints in moments of rapture seem extravagant, and we walk over them on dainty footsteps of taste; but let God's Spirit come down upon our hearts, and they are as sweetness on our tongues; nay, all too poor and meagre for our emotions; for feeling is always tropical, and seeks the most intense and fervid expression.

GOING into a village at night, with the lights gleaming on each side of the street, in some houses they will be in the basement and nowhere else, and in others in the attic and nowhere else, and in others in some middle chamber; but in

no house will every window gleam from top to bottom. So is it with men's faculties. Most of them are in darkness. One shines here, and another there; but there is no man whose soul is luminous throughout.

THE sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on the mountain top waves its sombre boughs and cries, "Thou art my sun." And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, "Thou art my sun." And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, "Thou art my sun."

So God sits, effulgent in heaven, not for a favoured few, but for the universe of life; and there is no creature so poor or so low that he may not look up with childlike confidence and say, "My Father! thou art mine."

THE man who carries a lantern in a dark night can have friends all around him, walking safely by the help of its rays, and he not defrauded. So he who has the God-given light of hope in his breast can help on many others in this world's darkness, not to his own loss, but to their precious gain.

THE abettors of slavery are weaving the thread in the loom, but God is adjusting the pattern. They are asses harnessed to the chariot of Liberty, and, whether they will or no, must draw it on.

THE fact that a nation is growing, is God's own charter of change.

YOU never can have congregational singing, if that is *all* you have. Unless you have singing in the family and singing in the house, singing in the shop and singing in the street, singing everywhere, until it becomes a habit, you never can have congregational singing. It will be like the cold drops, half-water, half-ice, which drip in March from some cleft of a rock,—one drop here and another there; whereas it should be like the August shower, which comes ten million drops at once, and roars on the roof.

I like to see people sing when they have to stop in the middle of the verse and cry a little. I like such unwritten rests and pauses in the music.

When hymns come to the house of God all redolent of home associations, then singing will be what it ought to be —social Christian worship.

A HELPING word to one in trouble is often like a switch on a railroad track—but one inch between wreck and smooth-rolling prosperity.

MANY men carry their conscience like a drawn sword, cutting this way and that, in the world, but sheathe it, and keep it very soft and quiet, when it is turned within, thinking that a sword should not be allowed to cut its own scabbard.

EVERY loving word that God speaks to us acts back again, and makes music in His heart. He never says, with a scowl, "Here comes that poor, limping sinner again." The path of the sinner back to God is brighter and brighter all the way up to the smile of the face and the touch of the hand; and *that* is salvation.

GOD builds for every sinner, if he will but come back, a highway of golden promises from the depths of degradation and sin clear up to the Father's house.

NO experience will ever reveal to us what changes are yet to come to us, or what new growth or pruning we shall have. We know not what a day will bring forth. We can become familiar with a landscape; we know where to find the waterfall and the shady ledge, where the violets grow in spring and the sassafras gives forth its odour; but we never can become familiar with our life-landscape; we never can tell where we shall come upon the shady dell, or where the fountains will gush and the birds sing. That is with God.

GOD pardons like a mother, who kisses the offence into everlasting forgetfulness.

RAPHAEL did well, and Phidias did well; but it is not painter or sculptor who is making himself most nobly immortal. It is he who is making true impressions upon the mind of man; frescoes for eternity, that will not shine out till the light of heaven reveals them; sculptures, not

wrought in outward things, but in the inward nature and character of the soul.

Our children that die young are like those spring bulbs which have their flowers prepared beforehand, and have nothing to do but to break ground, and blossom, and pass away. Thank God for spring flowers among men, as well as among the grasses of the field.

A Christianity which will not help those who are struggling from the bottom to the top of society needs another Christ to die for it.

Men plant prayers and endeavours, and go the next day looking to see if they have borne graces. Now, God does not send graces as he sends light and rain, but they are wrought in us through long days of discipline and growth. Acorns and graces sprout quickly, but grow long before ripening.

If any of you should die to-day, could you say to God, "Lord, here is my life work. Thou didst send me into life with a handful of seeds, and here is my heart, like a garden, full of flowers?"

The clearest window that ever was fashioned, if it is barred by spider's webs, and hung over with carcases of insects, so that the sunlight has forgotten to find its way through, of what use can it be? Now, the Church is God's window; and if it is so obscured by errors that its light is darkness, how great is that darkness!

If we are the Lord's we need not fear to see our treasures disappear, to have the cradle become empty, and friend after friend fall away; for father, and mother, and brother, and sister, and husband, and wife, and child are but sparks struck out from God—glowing names which, grouped together, mean God. So let us take our dear ones and enshrine them in Him, and place them in that crystal sphere where loss can never come.

The mother's heart is the child's school-room.

We are bound to be the almoners of God's bounty—not

tax-gatherers, to take away what little others have. As a father stands in the midst of his household, and says, "What is best for my children?" so we are to stand in the world, and say, "What is best for my brotherhood?"

We say a man is "made." What do we mean? That he has got the control of his lower instincts, so that they are only fuel to his higher feelings, giving force to his nature? That his affections are like vines, sending out on all sides blossoms and clustering fruits? That his tastes are so cultivated that all beautiful things speak to him, and bring him their delights? That his understanding is opened, so that he walks through every hall of knowledge, and gathers its treasures? That his moral feelings are so developed and quickened, that he holds sweet commerce with Heaven? Oh, no—none of these things. He is cold and dead in heart, and mind, and soul. Only his passions are alive; but—he is worth five hundred thousand dollars!

And we say a man is "ruined." Are his wife and children dead?—Oh, no. Have they had a quarrel, and are they separated from him?—Oh, no. Has he lost his reputation through crime?—No. Is his reason gone?—Oh, no; it is as sound as ever. Is he struck through with disease?—No. He has lost his property, and he is ruined. The *man* ruined! When shall we learn that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth?"

A man, in this world, is a boy spelling in short syllables; but he will combine them in the next.

Earthly love is a brief and penurious stream, which only flows in spring, with a long summer drought. The change from a burning desert, treeless, springless, drear, to green fields and blooming orchards in June, is slight in comparison with that from the desert of this world's affection to the garden of God, where there is perpetual, tropical luxuriance of blessed love.

Defeat is a school in which Truth always grows strong.

My best presentations of the Gospel to you are so incomplete! Sometimes, when I am alone, I have such sweet and rapturous visions of the love of God and the truths of His Word, that I think, if I could speak to you then, I should

move your hearts. I am like a child, who, walking forth some sunny summer's morning, sees grass and flower all shining with drops of dew. "Oh," he cries, "I'll carry these beautiful things to my mother." And, eagerly plucking them, the dew drops into his little palm, and all the charm is gone. There is but grass in his hand, and no longer pearls.

In our own strength we can do nothing. Who is there that is not tired of climbing up the black face of the cliff of Resolution, to fall back again, day after day, upon the shore? They who gain their subsistence by searching for nests along dangerous heights search with their waists girdled with a cord let down from above, that, if they slip, they shall not fall and be lost. We need God's golden cords and bands of promises, reaching from heaven, to enable us to defy stumbling or downfall. "Cast down, but not destroyed."

Success is full of promise till men get it; and then it is a last year's nest, from which the bird has flown.

No man can go down into the dungeon of his experience, and hold the torch of God's Word to all its dark chambers, and hidden cavities, and slimy recesses, and not come up with a shudder and a chill, and an earnest cry to God for divine mercy and cleansing.

The most miserable pettifogging in the world is that of a man in the court of his own conscience.

A man in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority, though he be alone, for God is multitudinous above all populations of the earth.

Men think religion bears the same relation to life that flowers do to trees. The tree must grow through a long period before the blossoming time; so they think religion is to be a blossom just before death, to secure heaven. But the Bible represents religion, not as the latest fruit of life, but as the whole of it—beginning, middle, and end. It is simply *right living*.

Great powers and natural gifts do not bring privileges to their possessor, so much as they bring duties.

God designed men to grow as trees grow in open pastures, full-boughed all around; but men in society grow like trees in forests, tall and spindling, the lower ones overshadowed by the higher, with only a little branching, and that at the top. They borrow of each other the power to stand; and if the forest be cleared, and one be left alone, the first wind which comes uproots it.

We go to the grave of a friend, saying, "A man is dead;" but angels throng about him, saying, "A man is born."

The German Protestant declared, "I have rights as against the Church." The Puritan Protestant declared, "I have rights as against government." The Independent or Congregational Protestant declared, "I have rights as against civil governments, Church governments, and all mankind. Neither the multitudes nor the organized few can take from me what God gave, and I will preserve." These were the great strides which landed on Plymouth Rock.

When your mind and heart are in such a state that praying is pushing a prayer through, like driving a wedge into a log, do you call it religion? It is as when your child, red-faced, and choking with passion, is held up by the servant to kiss you. He comes because he is pushed; and do you call that love?

Whether they shall confess their faults or not, men generally leave to their moods, and not to their principles.

For four thousand years the strong had been rushing on in the road of privilege and power, seeking greatness. Christ stood in the path, and said, "Ye seek greatness. Ye are not even in the way to it. Ye are going up, but the way to greatness is down. Let him who would be great be the love-servant of all." Greatness consists in the facility and power of going down, and not in the facility of going up.

A man ought to carry himself in the world as an orange-tree would if it could walk up and down in the garden—swinging perfume from every little censer it holds up to the air.

Wherever Presbyterianism has existed, it has always

been found a strong defender of liberty. Wherever Congregationalism has existed, it has always been the propagator of liberty. The one builds granaries; and no rat nor mouse shall nibble the wheat there. The other throws the storehouse doors wide open, and saying, "The field is the world," it scatters the grain broadcast over the earth.

Presbyterianism has been a port in which liberty has taken refuge; a bulwark, behind which it has been protected. Congregationalism is an army, well equipped and disciplined, bearing right down on the enemy, and taking possession of new territory.

How many hopes have quivered for us in past years—have flashed like harmless lightnings in summer nights, and died for ever!

Memory can glean, but can never renew. It brings us joys faint as is the perfume of the flowers, faded and dried, of the summer that is gone.

THE Puritan ideas were not seen to be of much value when they were first made known. They were like lands left by a father to infant children, which, when the children are of age, have become so valuable as to enrich them all. When the Puritan died, the property had not appreciated; but since then it has risen in value, so that we have built this nation with it; and still it has not run out, at least in the northern part of the country.

THERE are many troubles which you cannot cure by the Bible and the hymn book, but which you can cure by a good perspiration and a breath of fresh air.

THERE is no system which equals Calvinism in intensifying, to the last degree, ideas of moral excellence and purity of character. There never was a system since the world stood which puts upon man such motives to holiness, or which builds batteries that sweep the whole ground of sin with such horrible artillery. In its tendency to create strong individualism, which is the foundation of liberty, and to make men let each other alone, and say, "Stand back! the man is striving for his soul; put no obstacle in his way,"—in both these directions Calvinism has always worked for liberty.

WE look down at our fellows as the eagle looks over the edge of the cliff at the mice which crawl so far below him. This is

the selfishness of the moral nature. Our gifts and attainments are not only to be light and warmth in our own dwellings, but are as well to shine through the window, into the dark night, to guide and cheer bewildered travellers upon the road.

We ought to love life; we ought to desire to live here so long as God ordains it; but let us not so encase ourselves in time that we cannot break the crust and begin to throw out shoots for the other life.

As it is only now and then that we have a landslide, while we are continually annoyed by the dust which sifts in at every crack, and door, and window, so it is only now and then that we have a crashing trouble, while we are perpetually annoyed by little daily cares and vexations.

Let it be understood that the end of our existence here is that we may be more God-like; and may we know that we shall become so by being more manly in the world, and that we are placed here to grow strong and noble, and not merely to enjoy.

The most dangerous infidelity of the day is the infidelity of rich and orthodox Churches.

In the earlier ages of New England, the State was nothing but Congregationalism in civil affairs, and the Church was nothing but republicanism carried into religious affairs. They reflected each other.

New Englandism is but another word for Puritanism in the Independent sense, and that is but another word for New Testamentism.

Every Saturday evening has to my ear a gentle knell. The week tolls itself away; the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and the perfect seventh, and I can almost hear them beating a melodious measure as they recede.

Time does not end all at once. It is ending, in part, every day, and hour, and moment. And when the angel shall lift up his hand, and swear by Him who liveth for ever that it shall be no longer, the years which are past will not then have ended more than now.

In the morning, we carry the world like Atlas; at noon,

we stoop and bend beneath it; and at night, it crushes us flat to the ground.

God's Word is sometimes to us like a magic writing which has faded out and become invisible, and then, at other times, the lines reappear, and it flashes for us with a divine meaning.

You need not break the glasses of a telescope, or coat them over with paint, in order to prevent you from seeing through them. Just breathe upon them, and the dew of your breath will shut out all the stars. So it does not require great crimes to hide the light of God's countenance. Little faults can do it just as well. Take a shield, and cast a spear upon it, and it will leave in it one great dent. Prick it all over with a million little needle shafts, and they will take the polish from it far more than the piercing of the spear. So it is not so much the great sins which take the freshness from our consciences, as the numberless petty faults which we are all the while committing.

History is a mighty, thundering declaration of the falsity of the sentiment that God is not a God who will let men suffer. The history of the world is all suffering.

If I am working beside a man, and I see that he tries to shirk and shift his labour upon me, I am angry with him. But if he says to me, "I am wounded, and cannot work," or, "I am lame," or "sick," then the thought comes to me at once, "You shall not work; I will help you." And so if a man says to us, "I know I did wrong; but I am weak. Blame me as little as you can, but help me as much as you can," that very confession disarms us, and we think better of him than we did before. Therefore it is that God so exhorts us to confess our sins to him. God is like us to this extent, that whatever in us is good is like God.

When engineers would bridge a stream, they often carry over at first but a single cord. With that next they stretch a wire across. Then strand is added to strand until a foundation is laid for planks; and now the bold engineer finds safe footway, and walks from side to side. So God takes from us some golden-threaded pleasure, and stretches it hence into heaven. Then he takes a child, and then a friend. Thus

He bridges death, and teaches the thoughts of the most timid to find their way hither and thither between the shores.

Any feeling that takes a man away from his home, is a traitor to the household.

When I see how much has been written of those who have lived; how the Greeks preserved every saying of Plato's; how Boswell followed Johnson, gathering up every leaf that fell from that rugged old oak, and pasting it away,—I almost regret that one of the disciples had not been a recording angel, to preserve the odour and richness of every word of Christ. When John says, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," it affects me more profoundly than when I think of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, or the perishing of Grecian art in Athens or Byzantium. The creations of Phidias were cold stone, overlaid by warm thought; but Christ described His own creations when He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are life." The leaving out of these things from the New Testament, though divinely wise, seems, to my yearning, not so much the unaccomplishment of noble things, as the destruction of great treasures, which had already had oral life, but failed of incarnation in literature.

A Church under the influence of veneration merely, is a court-house; and the judge sits there, and cold officers are standing by him, and men are waiting to receive their sentence. God's Church is God's house; and God's house is our home; and a Christian home ought to be bright, cheerful, and happy. When God is the entertainer of His people, He thanks no man for "dim religious light," or for casting forth the flowers, and extinguishing the lamps of hope and joy in the sanctuary.

There are two classes of people in the Church: the religionists, who love God by trying to do right; and the Christians, who are inspired to do right by loving God.

When once the filial feeling is breathed into the heart, the soul cannot be terrified by augustness, or justice, or any form of divine grandeur; for then, to such an one, all the attri-

butes of God are but so many arms stretched abroad through the universe, to gather and to press to His bosom those whom He loves. The greater He is, the gladder are we, so that He be our Father still.

But, if one consciously turns away from God, or fears Him, the nobler and grander the representation be, the more terrible is his conception of the divine Adversary that frowns upon him. The God whom love beholds, rises upon the horizon like mountains which carry summer up their sides to the very top; but that sternly just God whom sinners fear, stands cold against the sky, like Mont Blanc; and from His icy sides the soul, quickly sliding, plunges headlong down to unrecalled destruction.

Public sentiment signifies the common march of good men's thoughts. It should be but a road marked plain, that men may know the way to travel; but, instead of this, public sentiment is employed sometimes as a bribe to stop free thinking; as an intimidation to check free acting; as a bauble to lure approbativeness, or as a threatened fool's cap by which to terrify it. The virtues which public sentiment drills into cowards, may be of great benefit to society, but are of little credit to the men upon whom they are dragooned.

All human affairs follow nature's great analogue, the growth of vegetation. There are three periods of growth in every plant. The first, and slowest, is the invisible growth by the root; the second, and much accelerated, is the visible growth by the stem; but when root and stem have gathered their forces, there comes the third period, in which the plant quickly flashes into blossom and rushes into fruit.

The beginnings of moral enterprises in this world are never to be measured by any apparent growth. The root is always concealed by the very soil which gives it life, and in which it spreads and hides. Then comes the middle period, in which it contends with opposing elements, but grows by the very things that would destroy it, as plants do by the winds that would prostrate them. At length comes the sudden ripeness and the full success, and he who is called in at the final moment deems this success his own. He is but the reaper, and not the labourer. Other men sowed and tilled, and he but enters into their labours. Before the time of Christ the world grew by the root; since that time until now it has grown by the stem; but ten thousand swelling

buds of promise and of prophecy do now declare the time near at hand for flowers and fruits. Henceforth the world makes haste.

God washes the eyes by tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more. O Love! O Affliction! Ye are the guides that show us the way through the great airy space where our loved ones walked; and as hounds easily follow the scent before the dew be risen, so God teaches us, while yet our sorrow is wet, to follow on and find our dear ones in heaven.

There are some days when a man's thoughts seem to be as distinct from his personality as sparks are from the chimney of a winter's forge, streaming forth at night; or as birds are distinct from the trees from out of which they fly. Nor, if the mood be happy, are they indeed much unlike birds, when, in a feathery fury of delight, with a hundred songs of melodious dissonance, they sitting sing, and flying sing, and turn in the air with every fantastic gyration.

How sad is that field from which battle has just departed! By as much as the valley was exquisite in its loveliness, is it now sublimely sad in its desolation. Such to me is the Bible, when a fighting theologian has gone through it.

How wretched a spectacle is a garden into which cloven-footed beasts have entered! That which yesterday was fragrant, and shone all over with crowded beauty, is to-day uprooted, despoiled, trampled and utterly devoured, and all over the ground you shall find but the rejected cuds of flowers, and leaves, and forms that have been champed for their juices and then rejected. Such to me is the Bible, when the pragmatic prophecy-monger and the swinish utilitarian have toothed its fruits and crauncbed its blossoms.

O garden of the Lord! whose seeds dropped down from heaven, and to whom angels bear watering dews night by night! O flowers and plants of righteousness! O sweet and holy fruits! we walk among you, and gaze with loving eyes, and rest under your odorous shadows; nor will we, with sacrilegious hand, tear you, that we may search the secret of your roots, nor spoil you, that we may know how such wondrous grace and goodness are evolved within you!

The voyage of life should be right across the ocean, whose

waters never shrink, and where the keel never rubs the bottom. But men are afraid to venture, and hang upon the coast, and explore lagoons, or swing at anchor in wind-sheltered bays. Some men put their keel into riches, some into sensuous pleasure, some into friendship, and all these are shallow for anything that draws as deep as the human soul does. God's work in each age, indicated by the great movements of His providence, is the only thing deep enough for the heart. We ought to begin life as at the source of a river, growing deeper every league to the sea; whereas, in fact, thousands are like men who enter the mouths of rivers and sail upwards, finding less and less water every day; and in old age they lie shrunk and gaping upon dry gravel.

GREATNESS lies not in being strong, but in the right using of strength; and strength is not used rightly when it only serves to carry a man above his fellows for his own solitary glory. He is greatest whose strength carries up the most hearts by the attraction of his own.

THERE is a reason why students prefer the night to the day for their labours. Through the day their thoughts are diverted into a thousand streams; but at night they settle into pools which, deep and undisturbed, reflect the stars. But night labour, in time, will destroy the student; for it is marrow from his own bones with which he fills his lamp.

LOVE is God's loaf; and this is that feeding for which we are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

A CUNNING man overreaches no one half so much as himself.

GOD has appointed certain insects, birds, and beasts to be destroyers. They consume decaying matters; they roll up and feast on filth. To their palate life is unseasoned and insipid, but death has flavour. Such also are minor critics in literature, cynics in morals, and heresy-hunters in religion.

SECTS and Christians that desire to be known by the undue prominence of some single feature of Christianity, are necessarily imperfect just in proportion to the distinctness of their peculiarities. The power of Christian truth is in its unity and symmetry, and not in the saliency or brilliancy of

any of its special doctrines. If among painters of the human face and form there should spring up a sect of the eyes, and another sect of the nose, a sect of the hand and a sect of the foot, and all of them should agree but in the one thing of forgetting that there was a living spirit behind the features more important than them all, they would too much resemble the schools and cliques of Christians, for the spirit of Christ is the great essential truth; doctrines are but the features of the face, and ordinances but the hands and feet.

It would almost seem as if there were a certain drollery of art which leads men who think they are doing one thing to do another and very different one. Thus men have set up in their painted church windows the symbolisms of virtues and graces, and the images of saints, and even of divinity itself. Yet now, what does the window do but mock the separations and proud isolations of Christian men? For there sit the audience, each one taking a separate colour, and there are blue Christians and red Christians, there are yellow saints and orange saints, there are purple Christians and green Christians; but how few are simple, pure, white Christians, uniting all the cardinal graces, and proud, not of separate colours, but of the whole manhood of Christ!

When laws, customs, or institutions cease to be beneficial to man, they cease to be obligatory.

The strength of a man consists in finding out the way in which God is going, and going in that way too. For God goes before and ploughs, and we can but follow after and plant our seed in His furrow.

The variableness of Christian moods is often a matter of great and unnecessary suffering; but Christian life does not follow the changes of feeling. Our feelings are but the torch; and our life is the man that carries it. The wind that flares the flame does not make the man waver. The flame may sway hither and thither, but he holds his course straight on. Thus oftentimes it is, that our Christian hopes are carried as one carries a lighted candle through the windy street, that seems never to be so nearly blown out as when we step through the open door, and in a moment we are safe within. Our wind-blown feelings rise and fall through all our life, and the draught of death threatens quite to extin-

guish them; but, one moment more, and they shall rise and for ever shine serenely in the unstormed air of heaven.

I THINK we ought to buoy for ourselves in our course, as we buoy a harbour. Off this shoal a black buoy floats, and says to those who sail by, as plainly as if it spoke in all languages, "Keep to the right here;" and over against it floats another, and says, "Keep to the left here." Now, in life's ocean, wherever we know the quicksands are, wherever we have once been stranded, let us sink the buoy and anchor of memory, and keep to the right or the left, as the shoal may be.

MANY pray to be made "men in Christ Jesus," and think in some miraculous way it will be given to them; but God says, "I will try my child, and see if he is sincere," and so He lays a burden upon him, and says, "Now, stand up under it, for thus you are to grow strong." He sends a provocation, and says to him, "Be patient." He throws him into perplexities, and says, "Where now are thy resources?" If the ambitious ore dreads the furnace, the forge, the anvil, the rasp, and the file, it should never desire to be made a sword. Man is the iron, and God is the smith; and we are always either in the forge or on the anvil. God is shaping us for higher things.

THERE are some Christians whose secular life is an arid, worldly strife, and whose religion is but a turbid sentimentalism. Their life runs along that line where the overflow of the Nile meets the desert. It is the boundary line between sand and mud.

NATURE inspires us with a love of life, but can never teach us how to die. God would win us into death as the sun wins buds into blossoms. I often hear Christians speaking of a desire to die, that they may be free from the troubles of life; and they seem to me like birds that fly out of the tree frightedly, on account of noises which they hear beneath. But true Christians, it seems to me, should be like birds upon the sunset-top, stooping with half-opened wings as if they heard the call of other birds in distant forests, and flew on purpose, and joyfully, to find their mates.

IF you can find a place between the throne of God and

the dust to which man's body crumbles where the focal responsibilities of law do not weigh upon him, I will find a vacuum in nature. They press upon him from God out of eternity, and from the earth out of nature, and from every department of life, as constant and all-surrounding as the pressure of the air.

THERE is a new word much used; it is *ism*. Every new or more perfect application of a Christian principle to the life of society, is called an ism, so long as men fight it, but a glorious evidence of the divinity of Christianity as soon as they are defeated by it. Selfish men abhor all isms of benevolence; proud men, all isms of condescension; the griping hand hates the open palm; greediness abhors moderation; and self-love thinks the love of others to be a spendthrift. And thus it comes to pass that *isms* are found and dreaded almost only among the great humanities of the day. If it be an ism to uplift the poor, to defend the slave; to maintain everywhere the right, though to do it overthrows time-honoured institutions,—then God Almighty is the Father of isms, and has been propagating them since the world began; and He will lead the Church from one ism to another, till it stands in Zion and before God.

WHAT a pin is when the diamond has dropped from its setting, that is the Bible when its emotive truths have been taken away. What a babe's clothes are when the babe has slipped out of them into death, and the mother's arms clasp only raiment, would be the Bible, if the Babe of Bethlehem, and the truths of deep-heartedness that clothed his life, should slip out of it.

OUR humiliations work out our most elevated joys. The way that a drop of rain comes to sing in the leaf that rustles in the top of the tree all summer long, is by going down to the roots first, and from thence ascending to the bough.

MANY children grow up like plants under bell glasses. They are surrounded only by artificial and prepared influences. They are house-bred, room-bred, nurse-bred, mother-bred—everything but *self-bred*. The object of training is to teach the child to take care of himself; but many parents use their children only as a kind of spool on which

to reel off their own experience; and they are bound and corded until they perish by inanity, or break all bonds and cords, and rush to ruin by reaction.

We have the promises of God as thick as daisies in summer meadows, that death, which men most fear, shall be to us the most blessed of experiences, if we trust in Him. Death is unclasping—joy breaking out in the desert—the heart come to its blossoming time! Do we call it dying when the bud bursts into flower?

Men who stand on any other foundation than the rock Christ Jesus, are like birds that build in trees by the side of rivers. The bird sings in the branches, and the river sings below, but all the while the waters are undermining the soil about the roots, till, in some unsuspected hour, the tree falls with a crash into the stream; and then its nest is sunk, its home is gone, and the bird is a wanderer. But birds that hide their young in the clefts of the rock are undisturbed, and, after every winter, coming again, they find their nests awaiting them, and all their life long brood the summer in the same places, impregnable to time or storm.

It is one of the worst effects of prosperity to make a man a vortex instead of a fountain; so that, instead of throwing out, he learns only to draw in.

In the first years of a Church, its members are willing to endure hardships and to make great exertions; but when once it is prosperous, they desire to take their ease; as one who builds a ship is willing to work all the way from keel to deck, until she is launched; thenceforward, he expects the ocean to buoy him up, and the winds to bear him on. The youth-time of Churches produces enterprise; their age, indolence. But even this might be borne, did not these dead men sit in the door of their sepulchres, crying out against every living man who refuses to wear the livery of death. I am almost tempted to think that if, with the end of every pastorate, the Church itself were disbanded and destroyed, to be gathered again by the succeeding teacher, we should thus secure an immortality of youth.

There is no such thing as preaching patience into people, unless the sermon is so long that they have to practise it

while they hear. No man can learn patience except by going out into the hurly-burly world, and taking life just as it blows. Patience is but lying to, and riding out the gale.

As musicians sometimes go through perplexing mazes of discord in order to come to the inexpressible sweetness of after chords, so men's discords of trouble and chromatic jars, if God be their leader, are only preparing for a resolution into such harmonious strains as could never have been raised except upon such undertones. Most persons are more anxious to stop their sorrow than to carry it forward to its choral outburst. "Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, *afterward*, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."

It is sometimes of God's mercy that men in the eager pursuit of worldly aggrandizement are baffled; for they are very like a train going down an inclined plane—putting on the brake is not pleasant, but it keeps the car on the track.

To the end of the world the word *garden* shall be sweeter than flower or fruit could make it; for the Son of God, the fairest thing that ever grew, was planted there, and sprang from thence in celestial bloom and glory.

Men often think an institution to *be* good because it has *done* good; but institutions are often only another kind of national school-book, whose object it is to help the scholar to pass on and leave *it* behind. Neither boys nor society are to be kept for ever in the horn-book. There must be, in any healthful society, a process of absorption, or of reconstruction of its organizations. Principles never change; their incarnations continually do. A society whose institutions are unchanging is itself ungrowing. The living body alters. Only the dead rest. That is a brave and good institution which speedily digs its own grave.

When our cup runs over, we let others drink the drops that fall, but not a drop from within the rim, and call it charity; when the crumbs are swept from our table, we think it generous to let the dogs eat them: as if that were charity

which permits others to have what we cannot keep; which says to Ruth, "Glean after the young men," but forgets to say to the young men, "Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her."

THERE is no such preaching as the experience which a man gives who has just realized the sinfulness of his soul. I often hear myself out-preached by some new convert who can hardly put words together. Some say experimental preaching is shallow. Shallow! It is deep as the soul of God.

MEN are afraid of breaking down where they are strongest, but are seldom afraid of their weaknesses. If a man is hard, he fears mellowness. A proud man watches lest he should let himself down. A selfish man is vigilant against being unduly tempted by profuse kindness; and no man has a more salutary fear of rash generosity than he whose pores are sealed so tight that all the suns of prosperity cannot open them. Men are apt to guard themselves where it is impossible for them to be overcome; but they are quite careless of those open avenues through which temptation comes and goes so easily that they are unconscious of wrong-doing, because they are not pained by it.

IT is not well for a man to pray cream, and live skim milk.

SOME men say, to retire to a little blissful nook, with a few congenial ones to love, and to hear the distant roaring of life as those in forests hear the ocean,—the music, and not the storm,—would be all the happiness they would ask on earth. Now, where society is but a grand machine of despotism, where all civil affairs are put away from the citizen, and all religious affairs are in the hands of the official priest, so that it is treason to be active in politics, and sacrilege to be freely active in religion, then retirement and leisure may be as virtuous as they are safe. But in our land, where society is an unbounded field for individual exertion of every kind, and a man's usefulness is limited only by his own original power, one needs a special edict of Providence to justify him in retiring from life. When leisure is a selfish luxury, its very activity, when it stirs, is apt to be only a kind of indolence taking exercise, that it may the better digest its selfishness.

Ever since the time of Christ, the Divine Helmsman has been steering the world straight towards the lighthouse of Love.

A true preacher is God's mint. God heats his heart till the truth flows like molten gold, and his utterance is prepared, as dies are, to stamp on the coin what God has cut in him. But thousands of preachers are only exchange brokers, who run between bank and customer to carry old coin back and forth for commercial uses. There is need for these too, only lower down.

A man might as well fill a tree full of nightingales, and, standing on the ground, attempt to control their notes, and to hold them enchoired together, as to attempt to control by his volitions the multiplied thoughts and feelings of his own soul. Some persons hearing this will say, "A man can regulate his mind as easily as his house." Certainly, if he has nothing more in his mind than is in his house; but faculties ought not to be furniture. We can appoint the bounds and the directions of our thoughts and feelings, but within those bounds we can no more control their individual spring, than a man can control all the motions of the drops of water in a stream because he has the power to fix its shores.

Men think God is destroying them because he is tuning them. The violinist screws up the key till the tense cord sounds the concert pitch; but it is not to break it, but to use it tunefully, that He stretches the string upon the musical rack.

There is always the need for a man to go higher, if he has the capacity to go.

There is no food for the soul or body which God has not symbolized. He is light for the eye, sound for the ear, bread for food, wine for weariness, peace for trouble. Every faculty of the soul, if it would but open its door, might see Christ standing over against it, and silently asking by His smile, "Shall I come in unto thee?" But men open the door and look down, not up, and thus see Him not. So it is that men sigh on, not knowing what the soul wants, but only that it needs something. Our yearnings are home-sicknesses for heaven; our sighings are for God, just as children

that cry themselves asleep away from home, and sob in their slumber, know not that they sob for their parents. The soul's inarticulate moanings are the affections yearning for the Infinite, and having no one to tell them what it is that ails them.

THERE is much contention among men whether thought or feeling is the better; but feeling is the bow, and thought the arrow, and every good archer must have both. Alone, one is as helpless as the other. The head gives artillery, the heart powder. The one aims, and the other fires.

SPREADING Christianity abroad is sometimes an excuse for not having it at home. A man may cut grafts from his tree till the tree itself has no top left with which to bear fruit. In the end, the power of Christian missions will be measured by the zeal of enlightened piety at home, as the circulation of blood at the extremities of the body will depend upon the soundness of the lungs and heart. I do not say that we should not send the Gospel abroad; but that we may do it, there must be more of it at home. We must deepen the wells of salvation, or drawing will run them dry.

MANY men affect to despise fear, and in preaching resent any appeal to it; but not to fear where there is occasion, is as great a weakness as to fear unduly, without reason. God planted fear in the soul as truly as he planted hope or courage. Fear is a kind of bell, or gong, which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance upon the approach of danger. It is the soul's signal for rallying.

THE world never was so low as at the creation. There is never so little of a tree as when it is in the seed. The births of God Almighty are births of weakness. Everything in the universe comes to its perfection by drill and marching—the seed, the insect, the animal, the man, the spiritual man. God created man at the lowest point, and put him into a world where almost nothing would be done for him, and almost everything should tempt him to do for himself. The very help which God gives men, is by teaching them how to help themselves. Want, sorrow, mistake, and all that men call evils, are but disciplinarians, who insist that the scholar shall learn his lesson himself, and who punish him until he does.

Look not alone for your relations in your own house or in your own sphere. The blood of Christ is stronger for relationship than blood of father or mother. Look above you. All there are yours. Go down even to the bottom of society. All below you are judgment-day brothers; and God's eternity is on them and you alike.

How wonderful is what we call association! I hang some thought upon an object, and say, "Whenever I come hither, ring for me as a bell of joy;" and upon another I fasten an experience, saying to it, "Toll to me of sadness;" and to another, "Give forth some bold, inspiring strain;" and to another, "Speak to me always of hope." And, thereafter, each thing, true to its nature, whether it be tree, or place, or rock, or house, or that which is therein, never forgets its lesson. Yea, and when we forget, they make us to remember, singing to us the notes which we had taught them. Thus the heart, though it may not dismember itself, to give a soul to the material world, has yet a power half to create in physical things a soul in each for itself. So its life is written out, and it keeps a journal upon trees, upon hills, upon the face of heaven. Is it not for this, then, that in turn God has used every object in nature, every event in life, every function of society, every affection and endearment of human love, yea, and things that are not, the very silences of the world, and memories that are but disembodied events, to represent to us by association His nature and affections? Thus the heaven and the earth do speak of God, and the great natural world is but another Bible, which clasps and binds the written one; for nature and grace are one. Grace is the heart of the flower, and nature but its surrounding petals.

Liberty is the soul's right to breathe, and when it cannot take a long breath, laws are girdled too tight. Without liberty man is in a syncope.

That which the persecutors once said of the apostles, ought still to be said of every Christian man: "And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus," (Acts iv. 13.)

Men carry unconscious signs of their life about them. Those that come from the forge, and those from the lime and mortar, and those from the humid soil, and those from

dusty travel, bear signs of being workmen, and of their work. One need not ask a merry face or a sad one whether it hath come forth from joy or from grief. Tears and laughter tell their own story. Should one come home with fruit, we say, "Thou art come from the orchard;" if with hands full of wild flowers, "Thou art from the fields;" if one's garments smell of mingled odours, we say, "Thou hast walked in a garden." But how much more, if one hath seen God, hath held converse of hope and love, and hath walked in heaven, should he carry in his eye, his words, and his perfumed raiment, the sacred tokens of Divine intercourse!

WHEN the fruit is yet green, the stem holds tightly to the bough; but when it is ripe, it falls with the first wind. So hold on tightly to your plans in life until God shows you that they are ripe—that they have accomplished their purpose; and then let them go; let them go without a murmur.

LOVE, in this world, is like a seed taken from the tropics, and planted where the winter comes too soon; and it cannot spread itself in flower-clusters and wide-twining vines, so that the whole air is filled with the perfume thereof. But there is to be another summer for it yet. Care for the root now, and God will care for the top by and by.

I HEARD a man who had failed in business, and whose furniture was sold at auction, say that when the cradle, and the crib, and the piano went, tears would come, and he had to leave the house to be a man. Now, there are thousands of men who have lost their pianos, but who have found better music in the sound of their children's voices and footsteps going cheerfully down with them to poverty, than any harmony of chorded instruments. Oh, how blessed is bankruptcy when it saves a man's children! I see many men who are bringing up their children as I should bring up mine, if, when they were ten years old, I should lay them on a dissecting table and cut the sinews of their arms and legs, so that they could neither walk nor use their hands, but only sit still and be fed. Thus rich men put the knife of indolence and luxury to their children's energies, and they grow up fatted, lazy calves, fitted for nothing, at twenty-five, but to drink deep and squander wide; and the father must be a slave all his life, in order to make beasts of his children. How blessed, then, is the stroke of disaster which sets the

children free, and gives them over to the hard but kind bosom of Poverty, who says to them, "Work!" and, working, makes them men!

Like those fair New England lakes, greened around with meadows, of translucent depth and silver sand, on whose surface armies of white lilies, golden-crowned, unfold to the sun, so the Christian's heart should be. All its feelings and affections should open into life like those white lilies, and deep amid the blossom petals should be seen the golden crown of love.

Temptations are enemies outside the castle seeking entrance. If there be no false retainer within, who holds treacherous parley, there can scarcely be even an offer. No one would make overtures to a bolted door or a dead wall. It is some face at the window that invites proffer. The violence of temptation addressed to us is only another way of expressing the violence of the desire within us. It costs nothing to reject what we do not wish, and the struggle required to overcome temptation measures the strength in us of the temptible element. Men ought not to say, "How powerfully the devil tempts!" but, "How strongly I am tempted!"

To be weighed down with a sense of our own incompleteness; to long for that which we have not and cannot gain; to descry noble attainments, as islands in the sea, eagerly sought, but which change to clouds as we draw near; to spend our life in searching for the hidden land, as Columbus for the new continent, and to find only weeds floating, or a broken branch, or, at best, a bird that comes to us from the unknown shore; this it is to be on earth—to live. And yet, are not these very yearnings the winds which God sends to fill our sails and give us good voyage homeward?

It is not so much by the symmetry of what we attain in this life that we are to be made happy, as by the enlivening hope of what we shall reach in the world to come. While a man is stringing a harp, he tries the strings, not for music, but for construction. When it is finished it shall be played for melodies. God is fashioning the human heart for future joy. He only sounds a string here and there to see how far His work has progressed.

That gospel which sanctions ignorance and oppression for three millions of men, what fruit or flower has it to shake down for the healing of the nations? It is cursed in its own roots, and blasted in its own boughs.

Men utter a vast amount of slander against their physical nature, and attempt to repair deficient virtue by maiming their animal passions. These are to be trained, guided, restrained, but never crucified or exterminated, for they are the soil in which we were planted. Our life on earth begins in the body, and depends for vigour upon the fullness and power of our physical nature. An acorn at first sprouts from the soil, and spreads its young leaves upon the surface of the ground. Every year its top grows away from it towards heaven; yet the top neither forgets nor scorns the earth-buried root. The brightest leaf which the sun loves, or the wind waves on the topmost bough, has leave to be beautiful by what the root gives it, and carries in its veins the blood which the cold root sucked up from the moist earth. The top will famish when the root is hungry.

The way to avoid evil is not by maiming our passions, but by compelling them to yield their vigour to our moral nature. Thus they become, as in the ancient fable, the harnessed steeds which bear the chariot of the sun.

Happy is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold, but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp is of its own shining. Such an one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners; as the sun wheels, bringing all the seasons with him from the south.

Men long for Christ on earth. Christ in heaven is not only faint and dim, but they think a heavenly Being cannot have earthly love. There may be more purity, they think, in heavenly love than in earthly, but less heartiness, and heartiness is what they long for. Now, Christ returned to heaven that He might love more, not less. This was a part of the glory which He had laid aside and was to take again. On earth His soul stood but in the bud. He went to a

fairer clime that He might blossom, and now the heavens and the earth are full of the fragrance of His love. Incarnation was limitation. Ascension was expansion. There was not room enough for such a heart while in the body. It came as a seed, and grew, but we saw only the sprouting and the leaves. Death ripened it back again to the golden fullness of a heavenly state.

No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich or poor according to what he *is*, not according to what he *has*.

God says, the peace of the man who loves Him shall flow like a river;* and if ours is not such, it is because its springs are not in Mount Zion—because its sources are the marshes and the lowlands, and not the crystal fountains of the hills. This peace shall not be like a shower, falling with temporary abundance, but like the river which flows by the cottage door, always full and always singing. The man hears it when he rises in the morning; he hears it in the quiet noon; he hears it when the sun goes down; and if he wakes in the night, its sound is in his ear. It was there when he was a child; it was there when he grew up to manhood; it was there when he was an old man; it will murmur by his grave upon its banks, and sing and flow for his children after him. It is to such a river that God likens the Divine bounty or peace given to His people.

How little do we know of this peace of God! We deem ourselves happy if we have one serene hour out of the twenty-four; and if now and then there comes a Sabbath which is balm at morning, and sweetness through the still noon, and benediction at evening, we count it a rare and blessed experience.

The child frightened in his play runs to seek his mother. She takes him upon her lap, and presses his head to her bosom; and with tenderest words of love she looks down upon him, and smooths his hair, and kisses his cheek, and wipes away his tears. And then, in a low and gentle voice, she sings some sweet descant, some lullaby of love, and the fear fades out from his face, and a smile of satisfaction plays

* "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isaiah xlviii. 18.

over it, and at length his eyes close, and he sleeps in the deep depths and delights of peace. God Almighty is the mother, and the soul is the tired child; and He folds it in His arms, and dispels its fears, and lulls it to repose, saying, "Sleep, my darling; sleep. It is I who watch thee." "He giveth His beloved sleep." The mother's arms encircle but one; but God clasps every yearning soul to His bosom, and gives to it the peace which passeth understanding, beyond the reach of care or storm.

A MAN has a right to picture God according to his need, whatever it be. This being shut up by ecclesiasticism to a narrow way of coming to God has stifled many a soul. The whole round of symbols has been employed to represent God to us, the loftiest as well as the lowest things. The bird that fans the sun, and the bird that hides from it under the leaf, are alike taken to symbolize Jehovah.

A man has a right to go to God by any way which is true to him. If you can think it out, that is your privilege. If you can feel it out, that is your privilege. One thing is certain: the child has a right to nestle in his father's bosom, whether he climbs there upon his knee or by the chair from behind; any way, so that it is his father. Wherever you have seen God pass, mark it, and go and sit in that window again.

IT is not work that kills men; it is worry. Work is healthy; you can hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. Worry is rust upon the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys the machinery, but the friction. Fear secretes acids; but love and trust are sweet juices.

MEN who have always thrust obstacles aside come to think their power invincible, and to make themselves a battering ram against fate and circumstances. And when God comes down to oppose them, at first they try to wrestle with Him; but they limp all their life after, like Jacob of old, for God never wrestles with a man without throwing him.

There are four degrees in men's experience of trouble. The lowest, and most pitiable, is that in which trouble overwhelms a man; in which he is carried away by the force and swell of its waves, as a leaf is borne down the current of a rushing river. Shame that a man,—a *man*,—the son of God,

and the heir of immortality, should be so swept and swayed by circumstances—a little money more or a little less—should crouch and fall down, unable to rise. May God spare me from seeing any of you in such a case. The second degree is that in which the man's troubles are about him like deep waters, but do not quite overpower him. He is just able to stand, and to keep his head above the waves. This is better than the first, but is the lowest of all that deserves the name of good. The third degree is that in which man's heart is like a room where the father sits with his family, while the storm roars without. The floods beat against the windows; the wind whistles and moans at every crevice; but he heeds it not, for the fire burns brightly, and his wife and children sit smiling in its glow. Here the man has so far conquered his trials that he has peace within. The fourth, and highest degree, is that in which the man's troubles have become luminous to him, in which he is victorious over them, and makes them yield him strength and joy. And it is God's design, in wrestling with men, to bring them to this state, in which their griefs shall be the food of ecstasy and the wine of triumph.

To be praised, and to have the reputation of liberality, is the way many people have of taking interest on what they lend to the Lord. It is probable that benevolence is only the cat's paw of vanity, when our obscure and casual kindnesses seem to us like pale, inodorous flowers grown in a solitary wood, and only public and bruited charities have colour and fragrance. A man should fear when he enjoys only what good he does publicly. Is it not the publicity, rather than the charity, that he loves? Is it not vanity, rather than benevolence, that gives such charities? A man must be very rich in secret charities before he can bear the strain of public beneficence.

The seventy-third psalm reminds me of some of Beethoven's symphonies; and *these*, again, always make me think of the tumult of the forest, when the wind roars, and swells, and surges with wild discord among the trees; when the branches creak and crash against each other, and every bough has a separate wail. By and by the wind lulls; and when twilight is beneath, and all the forest is quiet, or only so much noiseful as the insects make it, then some bird on a tree-top sings out clear and sweet, and his song goes floating

away over the wood, the very soul of peaceful joy. And it seems to me that the symphonies of Beethoven—that Milton of musicians—reproduce in themselves the sounds of the forest. In the opening passages, the half-concordant discords clash one upon another; there is moaning and strife, and war of sound; but at length out of the jar and the conflict is evolved a clear flowing melody, as sweet as the song of the bird, and as gentle as the twilight rustle of the leaves.

Now, this psalm is like the symphonies; for its opening verses clash upon each other, and are full of tumult and yearning.

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. . . . Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."

But when this strain is ended, then rises the sweet and joyful descant, "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

THROUGH the week we go down into the valleys of care and shadow. Our Sabbaths should be hills of light and joy in God's presence; and so, as time rolls by, we shall go on from mountain top to mountain top, till at last we catch the glory of the gate, and enter in to go no more out for ever.

WE should brave trouble, as the New England boy braves winter. The school is a mile away over the snowy hill, yet he lingers not by the fire, but, with his books slung over his shoulder, and his cap tied closely under his chin, he sets out to face the storm. And when he reaches the topmost ridge, where the powdered snow lies in drifts, and the north wind comes keen and biting, does he shrink and cower down beneath the fences, or run into the nearest house to warm himself? No; he buttons up his coat, and rejoices to defy the blast, and tosses the snow wreaths with his foot; and

so, erect and fearless, with strong heart and ruddy cheek, he goes on to his place at school.

Now, when the fierce winds of adversity blow over you, and your life's summer lies buried beneath frost and snow, do not linger inactive, or sink cowardly down by the way, or turn aside from your course for momentary warmth and shelter, but, with stout heart and firm step, go forward in God's strength to vanquish trouble, and to bid defiance to disaster. If there is ever a time to be ambitious, it is not when ambition is easy, but when it is hard. Fight in darkness; fight when you are down; die hard, and you wont die at all. That gelatinous-bodied man, whose bones are not even muscles, and whose muscles are pulp,—that man is a coward.

THE things which most concerned men in past ages—food, raiment, wealth, place, personal honour—are all forgotten now; but those things which seemed to them the most shadowy and unsubstantial,—their faith, their ideals, their principles,—these are now the only abiding remembrancers. Thus men are kept alive on earth by that which is invisible, and sunk to the bottom by that which is material. Time is made up of waters so thin, that nothing may float thereon which is heavier than unseen truths and heart treasures. As at sea we descry ships by the sails which lift themselves high above the curve of the ocean, while the dark and heavy hulls, where the freights are, are sunk below the sight;—so, the convoys of men that sailed in the past are no longer seen where they carried the much-prized freight, but in the lifting up of their spars and sails against the heaven, high above the bend and curve of the ocean of time.

THE more thorough a man's education is, the more he yearns for and is pushed forward to new achievement. The better a man is in this world, the better he is compelled to be. That bold youth who climbed up the Natural Bridge in Virginia, and carved his name higher than any other, found, when he had done so, that it was impossible for him to descend, and that his only alternative was to go on and scale the height, and find safety at the top. Thus it is with all climbing in this life. There is no going down. It is climbing or falling. Every upward step makes another needful; and so we must go on until we reach heaven, the summit of the aspirations of time.

Whenever an emotion rises up and projects its life into the intellect, and the intellect is magnetized by it, the truths belonging to that emotion will be clearer seen under these vision-judgments than at any other time. Many men confound moral excitements with those of their passions, and think it not prudent to act upon their feelings. They wait till excitement has cooled. The excitement of passion should cool, but of the nobler powers, never. I should as soon think of saying to the workmen at a foundry, "Why do you pour that liquid, scintillating iron into the mould? Why do you not wait till it is cold before you do it?"—as of asking a man why he heeded his convictions, and his judgments of moral truths, when his intellect was roused and his heart on fire. If he waits till he has cooled down, they will be as dross and cinders compared to what they would have been when his heart throbbed and was alive with blessed excitement.

An exploring party are seeking the best route across the isthmus for a canal from ocean to ocean. The country is unknown to them, and they make but little progress in their search. At length the leader descries a mountain, misty blue, against the horizon, and knows that its top will show them the whole way on either side. So on they press, now fording streams, and now lost in the obscurity of forests, but ever keeping the mountain before them, and drawing nearer and nearer, till, at nightfall, they rest upon its base, and with the morning light climb its side, and, lo! the land lies, picture-like, below them, stretching away on either hand to both oceans. They mark the watercourses, and the trend of the valleys, and behold, to the west, how the mountains open like a gate to the Pacific Sea, and how, to the east, a broad river with unconscious skill finds its way through the lowlands to the Atlantic. But suppose, while they can thus easily determine their course, some conservative among them should exclaim, "This is all folly. If we would judge rightly, we must be down where the valleys curve and the rivers run," and heeding his advice, they should all descend the mountain. Would they find their way down there? Would not the jungle shut them in, and hide from them the whole map?

Now, the soul's hours of strong excitement are its luminous hours—its mountains of vision, from which it looks over the landscape of life with unobstructed gaze. And the observations it then takes, and the judgments it forms, as far transcend the scope and truth of its ordinary sight and

reasoning as the view from the seaward-looking mountain transcends the view from the pent-up valley.

I AM profoundly affected by the grandeur of prophecy. God unveils the frescoed wall of the future, not so much that we may count the figures, and measure the robes, and analyze the pigments, but that, gazing upon it, our imaginations may be enkindled, and hope be inspired, to bear us through the dismal barrenness of the present. Prophecy was not addressed to the reason, nor to the statistical faculty, but to the imagination; and I should as soon think of measuring love by the scales of commerce, or of admiring flowers by the rule of feet and inches, or of applying arithmetic to taste and enthusiasm, as calculations and figures to these grand evanishing signals which God waves in the future only to tell the world which way it is to march.

THE disputes which have filled the Church upon the doctrine of perfection seem to me to have been pitiable. They reveal the narrowest conception of human character. God's idea of perfection is not mere conformity to rule and law, but, with this, development into a state far beyond anything known among men. Perfection is ripeness; but time is not a summer long enough to ripen the soul. Heaven is the soul's summer.

The perfection of the schools is a kind of mandarin perfection. Suppose a Chinese mandarin, whose garden was filled with dwarfed plants and trees, should show me an oak tree, two feet high, growing in a pot of earth, and should say to me,—

"A perfect tree must be sound at the root—must it not? And it must have all its branches complete, and its leaves green. Look here. This root is sound; there is no decay in the trunk; it has the full number of branches; the leaves are bright and green, and little acorns are ripening all over it. It is a perfect tree; why do you not admire it?"

A miserable two-feet oak! I turn from it to think of God's oak in the open pasture, a hundred feet high, wide-boughed, and braving the storm.

Now, when a man comes to me talking of perfection, and says, "A perfect man must have such and such qualities—must he not? He must control his passions and appetites, and regulate his affections. He must not sin in this thing,

or that thing, or the other. Such am I. I do not commit this fault, or fall into that error. I have trained and schooled myself. Behold me! I am perfect!" I can but exclaim, "Miserable two-feet Christian!" I have no patience with this low standard, these earthly comparisons, this relative goodness. I must outgrow this pot of earth. God's eternity is in my soul, and I shall need it all, to grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

NOT that which men do worthily, but that which they do successfully, is what history makes haste to record.

DUST, by its own nature, can rise only so far above the road; and birds which fly higher never have it upon their wings. So the heart that knows how to fly high enough, escapes those little cares and vexations which brood upon the earth, but cannot rise above it into that purer air.

WHEN mists have hung low over the hills, and the day has been dark with intermittent showers, at length great clouds begin to hurry across the sky, the wind rises, and the rain comes pouring down; then we look out and exclaim, "Why, this is the clearing-up shower." And when the floods have spent themselves, the clouds part to let the blue sky tremble through them, and the west wind bears them away seaward, and, though they are yet black and threatening, we see their silver edges as they pass, and know that just behind them are singing birds and glittering dew-drops; and, lo! while yet we look, the sun bursts forth, and lights them up in the eastern heaven with the glory of the rainbow.

Now, to the Christian whose life has been dark with brooding cares that would not lift themselves, and on whom chilling rains of sorrow have fallen at intervals through all his years, death, with its sudden blast and storm, is but the clearing-up shower; and just behind it are the songs of angels, and the serenity and glory of heaven.

THE truest self-respect is not to think of self.

MEN in extensive and prosperous business are often a target for envy to shoot at; and when they fail and go down, there are thousands who wickedly rejoice in their fall. But in our days some men are institutions. They do not stand

like Pompey's Pillar or Cleopatra's Needle, towering to the sky, detached and alone; they are like mountains which carry forests far up their sides, and shelter and nourish ten thousand living things in their shadow. Some one says, "Why do you care that that water-wheel is broken? A black, lumbering thing, half of the time in the water and half of the time out. Why do you not care for the nicer wheels and spindles within the building?"

I do care, and therefore I am sorry for the breaking of the great wheel. Its axis passes within, and by drum and bands its power is communicated to the various rooms, and every spindle is dependent upon its revolutions. When an earthquake comes, by as much as a house is elevated above the others, by so much is its ruin greater than theirs—the third storey crashing into the second, and the second into the first. Now, men in extensive business are mountains of shelter; ponderous wheels that turn the mill; lofty houses which cannot fall without causing wide-spread disaster; and when we hear of their failure, we must not think of them alone, but also of the ten thousand dependents who are affiliated with them. In a not irreverent sense it may be said, they are "set for the fall and rising of many in Israel."

"I AM the way." As a road is that along which men go to their daily avocations, God chooses it to represent Himself in this universal use, this underlying support of all things. Who would dare to say this of God but God? Some beasts carry their young, and some birds carry their young, and mothers carry their children; but who but God could say, "I am the road; press Me with your feet." This is the highway cast up; and on it the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

I PITY those women whose staff is their needle; for when they lean upon it, it pierces, not their side, but their heart. The devil's broadsword, in this world, has often been the needle with which a woman sews to earn her daily bread. I think the needle has slain more than the sword of war.

WHEN there is love in the heart, there are rainbows in the eyes, which cover every black cloud with gorgeous hues.

OUR life begins in the senses. Men walk upon the ground;

but above it God has sprung the blue arch of heaven, and they live by breathing the air. So it is with our interior life. The material world is the foundation, the grand workshop for our faculties; but if this be all—if there hangs not above it God's invisible realm of truth, in which we breathe —there can be no healthy living. That a plant may grow, we put manure into the soil; but when the roots have taken hold upon it, and it has shot up into stem, and leaves, and flowers, we do not pour manure into the white blossom. It holds up its cup, and says, "O Heaven! send thy light, and drop down thy dew." And the light glows, and the dew falls, and the flower expands by feeding upon the air.

So man's life must begin in the material. He must first learn how to live as an animal, and must employ all those forces which will contribute to his development; but when he comes to the blossoms of faith, and hope, and courage, he needs other aliment. They must unfold, and be nourished in God's upper air.

LET the day have a blessed baptism by giving your first waking thoughts into the bosom of God. The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the day.

WHEN God shakes men as dust from under the summer thrashing-floor, the right hand of a man's strength is as powerless as the left hand of a man's weakness, and his wisdom is as folly. What avails the wisdom of the apple to make it cling to the bough when it is ripe in autumn time? or the wisdom of the leaf to hold it fast to the stem when the tempest calls? or the wisdom of the tree to make it stand secure when a rock from the cliff comes crashing down through its piny branches? When God sends storms upon men, they must imitate the humble grass, which saves itself by lying down. It is better to lie down than to break down. Therefore it is said, "Humble yourselves before the mighty hand of God, that in due season He may raise you up."

WHEN at last the sound of death shall be in our ears, may it be but the noise of the wheels of God Almighty's chariot come to take us home—our schooling over, and our long vacation begun in heaven. For ever! Not this side the grave, which extinguishes all, but in that proud land

which lies beyond, unseen by mortal eye, thank God! and unwet by mortal tear.

That which men suppose the imagination to be, and to do, is often frivolous enough and mischievous enough; but that which God meant it to be in the mental economy is not merely noble, but supereminent. It is the distinguishing element in all refinement. It is the secret and marrow of civilization. It is the very eye of faith. The soul without imagination is what an observatory would be without a telescope.

As the imagination is set to look into the invisible and immaterial, it seems to attract something of their vitality; and though it can give nothing to the body to redeem it from years, it can give to the soul that freshness of youth in old age which is even more beautiful than youth in the young. It always seems to me that, before we leave this realm, deep affections take hold of the life to come by the hands of ideality, so that this quality in the old hovers upon the edge and bound of life, the morning star of immortality. Thus it is with men as with evening villages. The lights in some dwellings are extinguished soon after twilight; in others, they hold till nine o'clock; one by one they go out, until midnight; but a few houses there are where the student's lamp or lover's watching torch holds bright till morning pours their light into the ocean of its own. So such men bring through the flooded hours of darkness the light of yesterday into to-day, and are never dark and never die. Thus it comes to pass as it is written, "Upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death a great light is arisen."

Doctrine is nothing but the skin of Truth set up and stuffed.

So many are God's kindnesses to us, that, as drops of water, they run together; and it is not until we are borne up by the multitude of them, as by streams in deep channels, that we recognize them as coming from Him. We have walked amid His mercies as in a forest where we are tangled among ten thousand growths, and touched on every hand by leaves and buds which we notice not. We cannot recall all the things He has done for us. They are so many that they must needs crowd upon each other, until they

go down behind the horizon of memory, like full hemispheres of stars that move in multitudes and sink, not separate and distinguishable, but multitudinous, each casting light into the other, and so clouding each other by common brightness.

THERE are moral crises in life—certain conjunctures of affairs when God displays Himself as He never does at other times; and if we do not then make observations, like some stellar phenomena, certain truths will not come again for ages, and to us, never!

Suppose a man had travelled weary miles northward to see the midnight sun, and at length he reaches the little village in Norway where astronomers say at twelve o'clock the sun will touch the horizon, and then begin to ascend. He looks at his watch, and sees that it is ten o'clock, and says, "Some time yet. I am tired. I'll rest awhile." And so he throws himself down, and is soon lost in slumber. Meanwhile the sun descends, till at the appointed time his lower limb rests upon the pines that skirt the horizon; and then he slowly rises again into the great round of heaven. By and by the man awakes, and looks at his watch, and finds that it is two o'clock. The sun is two hours high; he has missed the very thing which he journeyed so far to see, and having but a single day, must needs depart as he came.

Now, there are men who pray for clearer views of God, for a greater nearness to Him, for an opener heaven and more resplendent hope. At length God, who loves to come in storms, draws near to them. Their sorrow, their trouble, their confusion of affairs, the darkness about them, are clouds which bring God upon their bosom. In that solemn eclipse, hid behind trouble, God would have taught an open ear some things which the whole life had pined to know. He would have shown them time, men, affairs, the glory of the world, as they see them who in heaven stand at God's right hand. But men are so absorbed in their trials that they neither hear nor see. The disciples lost the solemn passion of Christ through sleep; and, until now, sleep or tears have hid from men those very truths which would have given everlasting wakefulness to the soul, and wiped all sad weeping from the eyes. No men have need to be so vigilant, so attentive, so listening, so appreciative, as those who are in deep trouble. Sorrow is Mount

Sinai. If one will go up and talk with God, face to face, he must not fear the voice of thunder, nor the trumpet sounding long and loud.

One of the affecting features in a life of vice is the longing, wistful outlooks given by the wretches who struggle with unbridled passions, towards virtues which are no longer within their reach. Men in the tide of vice are sometimes like the poor creatures swept down the stream of mighty rivers, who see people safe on shore, and trees, and flowers, as they go quickly past; and all things that are desirable gleam upon them for a moment to heighten their trouble, and to aggravate their swift-coming destruction.

Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things. Far up the mountain side lies a block of granite, and says to itself, "How happy am I in my serenity —above the winds, above the trees, almost above the flight of the birds! Here I rest, age after age, and nothing disturbs me."

Yet what is it? It is only a bare block of granite, jutting out of the cliff, and its happiness is the happiness of death.

By and by comes the miner, and with strong and repeated strokes he drills a hole in its top, and the rock says, "What does this mean?" Then the black powder is poured in, and with a blast that makes the mountain echo, the block is blown asunder, and goes crashing down into the valley. "Ah!" it exclaims as it falls, "why this rending?" Then come saws to cut and fashion it; and humbled now, and willing to be nothing, it is borne away from the mountain and conveyed to the city. Now it is chiselled and polished, till, at length, finished in beauty, by block and tackle it is raised, with mighty hoistings, high in air, to be the top-stone on some monument of the country's glory.

So God Almighty casts a man down when he wants to chisel him, and the chiselling is always to make him something finer and better than he was before.

It is a joy to know that there is a realm where all those aspirations which have beckoned us only to crown us still with thorns, shall be realized; and where there is no bud which shall not burst into blossom, and no blossom which shall fall without being filled into fruit.

LIKE those airy sprites in fairy tales who rear the building through the night, unseen in the process, but clear and distinct in the morning's completion, so years, and hours, and moments are silently rearing, in this world's darkness, a soul-structure, whose proportions the sunlight of eternity shall reveal.

GOD made the world to relieve an over-full creative thought; as musicians sing, as we talk, as artists sketch, when full of suggestions. What profusion is there in His work! When trees blossom there is not a single breastpin, but a whole bosom full of gems; and of leaves they have so many suits that they can throw them away to the winds all summer long. What unnumbered cathedrals has He reared in the forest shades, vast and grand, full of curious carvings, and haunted evermore by tremulous music; and in the heavens above, how do stars seem to have flown out of His hand faster than sparks out of a mighty forge!

WHEN a man undertakes to repent towards his fellow-men, it is repenting straight up a precipice; when he repents towards law, it is repenting into the crocodile's jaws; when he repents towards public sentiment, it is throwing himself into a thicket of brambles and thorns; but when he repents towards God, he repents towards all love and delicacy. God receives the soul as the sea the bather, to return it again, purer and whiter than he took it.

EVERY Christian should begin to doubt himself, if he finds, after ten years, that self-denial is as hard in the same things as it was at first.

THERE are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths, which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing a while upon the roof and then fly away.

WHEN a man defrauds you in weight, he sins against *you*, not against the scales, which are only the instrument of determining true and false weight. When men sin, it is against God, and not against His law, which is but the indicator of right and wrong. You care little for sins against God's law. It has no blood in its veins, no sensibility. Now, every sin

that you commit is personal to God, and not merely an infraction of his *law*. It is casting javelins and arrows of base desire into his loving bosom. I think no truth can be discovered which would be so powerful upon the moral sense of men, as that which should disclose to them that sinning is always a personal offence against a personal God. Law without, is only on echo of God's heart-beat within.

PAUL and his companions meddled, to be sure, only with the religion of Jesus Christ; but that, faithfully preached, meddles with everything else on earth.

A TRAITOR is good fruit to hang from the boughs of the tree of liberty.

WHEN I used to fish in mountain streams, if I had a short line and rod, I could direct it easily, and throw it into this or that pool as I pleased; but if I let out my line till it was twenty or thirty feet long, I could not direct it, but I was the victim of every floating stick, and jutting rock, and overhanging bough. So I have seen men wading down the stream of life, jumping from stone to stone, slipping on this rock, and falling into that pool, because their line was so long they could do nothing with it—a line that reached down forty years, sometimes. Now, if you would avoid these difficulties, *shorten your line!* Let it reach over one day only; for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." To the man who is living weeks or years in advance of the present, God says, "Go back, go back to your duties. Work while the day lasts, and take no thought for the morrow. *I* am master down here."

WHAT trees are in summer, covered with leaves and blossoms, exhaling perfume, and filled with merry birds that sing out of their hidden choirs, are Conscience, Veneration, Fear even, when they are shined upon by Love; but, without love, any of these faculties is like that tree in winter, through which the wind whistles and the storm—gaunt, leafless, bloodless.

"BE ye kindly affectioned one towards another," does not refer to an occasional impulse, but to a reservoired state of feeling, out of which the various parts of life ought to flow. Christian graces should be like Croton water, which presses

from the reservoir on every faucet in the city. Each one should be full and ready for use when needed, whereas they are too often like a pump run down, and need a deal of working before they can supply our need.

Laboured sermons sometimes sweep over the mind as winds sweep over the sea, leaving it more troubled than before; when one little hymn, child-warbled, would be to the soul like Christ's "Peace, be still," to the waves of Galilee.

There is no class in society who can so ill afford to undermine the conscience of the community, or to set it loose from its moorings in the eternal sphere, as merchants, who live upon confidence and credit. Anything which wakens or paralyzes this, is taking beams from the foundations of the merchant's own warehouse.

An oak tree for two hundred years grows solitary. It is bitterly handled by frosts; it is wrestled with by ambitious winds, determined to give it a downfall. It holds fast and grows alone. "What avails all this sturdiness?" it saith to itself. "Why am I to stand here useless? My roots are anchored in rifts of rocks; no herds can lie down under my shadow; I am far above singing birds, that seldom come to rest among my leaves; I am set as a mark for storms, that bend and tear me; my fruit is serviceable for no appetite; it had been better for me to have been a mushroom, gathered in the morning for some poor man's table, than to be a hundred-year oak, good for nothing."

While it yet spoke, the axe was hewing at its base. It died in sadness, saying as it fell, "Weary ages for nothing have I lived."

The axe completed its work. By and by the trunk and root form the knees of a stately ship, bearing the country's flag around the world. Other parts form keel and ribs of merchantmen, and, having defied the mountain storms, they now equally resist the thunder of the waves and the murky threat of scowling hurricanes. Other parts are laid into floors, or wrought into wainscoting, or carved for frames of noble pictures, or fashioned into chairs that embosom the weakness of old age. Thus the tree, in dying, came not to its end, but to its beginning of life. It voyaged the world. It grew to parts of temples and dwellings. It held upon its

surface the soft tread of children and the tottering steps of patriarchs. It rocked in the cradle. It swayed the limbs of age by the chimney corner, and heard, secure within, the roar of those old, unwearied tempests that once surged about its mountain life. Thus, after its growth, its long uselessness, its cruel prostration, it became universally helpful, and did by its death what it could never have done by its life. For, so long as it was a tree, and belonged to itself, it was solitary and useless; but when it gave up its own life, and became related to others, then its true life began.

How solemn is that sentence of Christ, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!" Not while He lived; not by His direct force, but only when pierced, broken, slain, buried, should His influence issue forth, and death should become the throne of His power. So will it be with us if we are Christ's. Paradoxes upon this truth lie all through the New Testament, and one may walk on them, like stepping-stones, from side to side. Sorrow is joy. Death is life. Down is up. Weakness is strength. Loss is gain. Defeat is victory. The world's mightiest men, the very monarchs of its joy, were they who died deaths daily.

"I CAN forgive, but I cannot forget," is only another way of saying, "*I will not forgive.*" A forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note, torn in two and burned up, so that it never can be shown against the man.

NEXT to victory, there is nothing so sweet as defeat, if only the right adversary overcomes you.

WHEN we are pierced with afflictions, the way is not to go to God and say, "Take away this thorn!" God says, "No. I put it there to bleed you where you are plethoric."

Suffering well borne is better than suffering removed. Suffering did not slip in, as theologians make so many things to have done, at the Fall; but it is a part of God's original method. I know enough of gardening to understand, that if I would have a tree grow upon its south side, I must cut off the branches there. Then all its forces go to repairing the injury, and twenty buds shoot out where otherwise there would have been but one. When we reach the garden above, we shall find that out of those very wounds

over which we sighed and groaned on earth, have sprung verdant branches, bearing precious fruit, a thousandfold.

SUFFERING, in this world, is both remedial and penal. When it is rightly received, it is remedial. When it is resisted, it becomes penal to him who resists, and admonitory to the spectator.

Suffering is the jarring of the faculties of the mind one upon another, and it never will cease till they are all tuned to harmony. There are two ways of escaping from suffering; the one by rising above the causes of conflict, the other by sinking below them; for there is quiet in the soul whenever all its faculties are harmonized about any centre. The one is the religious method; the other is the vulgar worldly method. The one is called Christian elevation; the other stoicism.

GOD'S promises are the comfort of my life. Without them I could not stand for an hour in the whirl and eddy of things, in the sweep and surge of the nations; but I cannot tell *how* He will fulfil them, any more than I can tell from just what quarter the first flock of bluebirds will come in the spring. Yet I am sure that the spring will come upon the wings of ten thousand birds.

LET every man come to God in his own way. God made you on purpose, and me on purpose, and He does not say to you, "Repent, and feel as Deacon A. feels," or, "Repent, and feel as your minister feels," but, "Come just as you are, with *your* mind and heart, and education and circumstances."

You are too apt to feel that your religious experience must be the same as others have; but where will you find analogies for this? Certainly not in nature. God's works do not come from His hand like coins from the mint. It seems as if it were a necessity that each one should be in some sort distinct from every other. No two leaves on the same tree are precisely alike; no two buds on one bush have the same unfolding, nor do they seek to have.

What if God should command the flowers to appear before Him, and the sunflower should come bending low with shame because it was not a violet, and the violet should come striving to lift itself up to be like a sunflower, and the lily should seek to gain the bloom of the rose, and the rose

the whiteness of the lily; and so, each one disdaining itself, should seek to grow into the likeness of the other. God would say, "Stop, foolish flowers! I gave you your own forms, and hues, and odours, and I wish you to bring what you have received. O sunflower, come as a sunflower; and you, sweet violet, come as a violet; and let the rose bring the rose's bloom, and the lily the lily's whiteness." Perceiving their folly, and ceasing to long for what they had not, violent and rose, lily and geranium, mignonette and anemone, and all the floral train, would come each in its own loveliness, to send up its fragrance as incense, and all to wreathe themselves in a garland of beauty about the throne of God.

Now, God speaks to you as to the flowers, and says, "Come with the form and nature that I gave you. If you are made a violet, come as a violet. If you are a rose, come as a rose. If you are a shrub, do not desire to be a tree. Let everything abide in the nature which I gave it, and grow to the full excellence that is contained in that nature."

The popular impression is, that grace is designed to change men *from* nature. No. They are sinful simply because they have deviated from their true nature, or fallen short of it. Grace is given to bring out the fullness of every man's nature. Not the nature which schoolmen write about; but that nature which God thought of when He put forth man, and pronounced him a child of God, bearing his Father's likeness.

Men are not so much mistaken in desiring to advance themselves as in judging what will be an advance, and what the right method of it. An ambition which has conscience in it will always be a laborious and faithful engineer, and will build the road, and bridge the chasms between itself and eminent success by the most faithful and minute performances of duty. The liberty to go higher than we are is given only when we have fulfilled amply the duty of our present sphere. Thus men are to rise upon our performances, and not upon their discontent. And this is the secret and golden meaning of the command to be *content* in whatever sphere we are placed. It is not to be the content of indifference, of indolence, of unambitious stupidity, but the content of industrious fidelity. When men are building the foundations of vast structures, they must needs labour far below the surface, and in disagreeable conditions. But every course of stone which they lay raises them higher; and at length, when they reach the surface, they have laid such

solid work under them that they need not fear now to carry up their walls, through towering storeys, till they overlook the whole neighbourhood. A man proves himself fit to go higher who shows that he is faithful where he is. A man that will not do well in his present place, because he longs to be higher, is fit neither to be where he is nor yet above it; he is already too high, and should be put lower.

MANY people use their refinements as a spider uses his web—to catch the weak upon, that they may be mercilessly devoured. Why not, rather, as the silkworm uses its web? It lives to spin it, and dies that it may yield it for others' benefit.

It is not wrong that men who have intellectual powers and tastes like ours should become agreeable to us; but that those who have them not should become to us disagreeable, is wrong. Every man should use his intellect, not as those who study in their libraries, when all the world is asleep, use their lamps for their own seeing only; but as lighthouses use their lanterns, that those who are far off upon the deep may see the shining, and learn their way. God appoints our graces to be nurses to other men's weaknesses.

A RELIGIOUS life is not a thing which spends itself like a bright bubble on the river's surface. It is rather like the river itself, which widens continually, and is never so broad or so deep as at its mouth, where it rolls into the ocean of eternity.

MEN are afraid of slight outward acts which will injure them in the eyes of others, while they are heedless of the damnation which throbs in their souls in hatreds, and jealousies, and revenges.

They are more troubled by the outburst of a sinful disposition, than by the disposition itself. It is not the evil, but its reflex effect upon themselves, that they dread. It is the love of approbation, and not the conscience, that enacts the part of a moral sense in this case. If a man covets, he steals. If a man has murderous hate, he murders. If a man broods dishonest thoughts, he is a knave. If a man harbours sharp and bitter jealousies, envies, hatreds, though he never express them by his tongue, or shape them by his hand, they are there. Society, to be sure, is less injured by their latent existence than it would be by their overt forms.

But the man himself is as much injured by the cherished thoughts of evil in his own soul, as by the open commission of it, and sometimes even more. For evil brought out ceases to disguise itself, and seems as hideous as it is. But evil that lurks and glances through the soul avoids analysis, and avoids detection.

There are many good-seeming men who, if all their day's thoughts and feelings were to be suddenly developed into acts, visible to the eye, would run from themselves, as men in earthquakes run from the fiery gapings of the ground, and sulphurous cracks that open the way to the uncooled centre of perdition.

Pride slays thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. When any mercy falls, he says, "Yes, but it ought to be more. It is only manna as large as a coriander seed, whereas it ought to be like a baker's loaf."

How base a pool God's mercies fall into, when they plash down into such a heart as that!

If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would it draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold.

There are many Christians who, all their life long, carry their hope as a boy carries a bird's nest containing an unfledged bird that can scarcely peep, much less sing—a poor, fledgeless hope.

We must not make the ideas of contentment and aspiration quarrel, for God made them fast friends. A man may aspire, and yet be quite content until it is time to rise. A bird that sits patiently while it broods its eggs flies bravely afterwards, leading up its timid young. And both flying and resting are but parts of one contentment. The very

fruit of the Gospel is aspiration. It is to the human heart what spring is to the earth; making every root, and bud, and bough desire to be more.

Repentance is neither base nor bitter. It is good rising up out of evil. It is the resurrection of your thoughts out of graves of lust. Repentance is the turning of the soul from the way of midnight to the point of the coming sun. Darkness drops from the face, and silver light dawns upon it. Do not live, day by day, trying to repent, but fearing the struggle and the suffering. Deferred repentance, in generous natures, is a greater pain than would be the sorrow of real repentance. Manly regret for wrong never weakens, but always strengthens the heart. As some plants of the bitterest root have the whitest and sweetest blossoms, so the bitterest wrong has the sweetest repentance, which, indeed, is only the soul blossoming back to its better nature.

Christ never seems to us so sweet and glorious as when He orbs himself over the sea of our sinfulness and ingratitude.

Not parties, but principles. Let us be of no party but God's party, and use all other agencies as we use railroad cars—travelling upon one train as far as it will take us in the right direction, and then leaving it for another.

When we think of the labour required to rear the few that are in our households,—the weariness, the anxiety, the burden of life,—how wonderful seems God's work! for He carries heaven, and earth, and all realms in His bosom.

Many think that God takes no thought for anything less than a star or a mountain, and is unmindful of the little things of life; but when I go abroad, the first thing which I see is the grass beneath my feet, and, nestling in that, flowers smaller yet, and, lower still, the mosses with their inconspicuous blooms, which beneath the microscope glow with beauty. And if God so cares for "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," shall He not much more care for the minutest things of your life, "oh ye of little faith?"

Every child walks into existence through the golden gate of love, else it would seem wonderful that the helpless thing

should be born. Yet children are not playthings, as we too often seem to think they are—mere gifts of God to fill up the hours with cheer. They were surely meant to be a pleasure to us, but that is not the final end. Nor were they meant to be cares and burdens alone. To speak of them as if they were shackles and fetters upon our freedom; always in the way; "children, children everywhere," is a shame and a sin. They are to be regarded as a part of our education. Men cannot be developed perfectly who have not been compelled to bring children up to manhood. You might as well say that a tree is a perfect tree without leaf or blossom, as to say that a man is a man who has gone through life without experiencing the influences that come from bending down, and giving one's self up to those who are helpless and little.

Children make men better citizens. When your own child comes in from the street, and has learned to swear from the boys congregated there, it is a very different thing to you from what it was when you heard the profanity of those boys as you passed them. Now it makes you feel that you are a stockholder in the public morality. Of what use would an engine be to a ship, if it were lying loose in the hull? It must be fastened to it with bolts and screws, before it can propel the vessel. Now, a childless man is like a loose engine. A man must be bolted and screwed to the community before he can work well for its advancement; and there are no such screws and bolts as children.

A GREAT deal of our heart-life is cryptogamous—mosses and inconspicuous blooms hidden in the grass, thoughtlets, the *intents* of the heart. We are hardly aware of this life; but as God sees in winter all the flowers which are yet sleeping beneath the soil, so He sees all the hidden feelings of our hearts. He knows every root, and what will spring from it, and comprehends its intents, which are yet but germs, as well as its thoughts, which have already blossomed.

SOME people think black is the colour of heaven, and that the more they can make their faces look like midnight, the more evidence they have of grace. But God, who made the sun and the flowers, never sent me to proclaim to you such a lie as that. We are told to "rejoice in the Lord always." What then? "And again I say, Rejoice." Thus, in a mes-

sage in which there was time for but two things, both of them were joy. The test of your Christian character should be, that you are a joy-bearing agent to the world.

THE discipline of this world is to take a creature born in a physical condition, and to develop in him the higher life of the affections, until he can use the inward faculties, instead of the outward senses, to recognize truth. This is called faith; and, instead of faith's being a difficult thing, a man has to throw the dead wood of logic and of scepticism right across the current of his life, to prevent him from exercising it.

DO not come to me, and tell me you are fit to join the Church, because you love to pray morning and night. Tell me what your praying has *done* for you; and then call your neighbours, and let me hear what they think it has done for you.

IF a thing reflects no light, it is black; if it reflects part of the rays, it is blue, or indigo, or red; but if it reflect them all, it is white. If we are like Christ, we shall seek, not to absorb, but to reflect the light which falls upon us from heaven upon others, and thus we shall become pure and spotless; for this is the meaning of the "white robes" which the saints wear in glory.

A BABE is a mother's anchor. She cannot swing far from her moorings. And yet a true mother never lives so little in the present as when by the side of the cradle. Her thoughts follow the imagined future of her child. That babe is the boldest of pilots, and guides her fearless thoughts down through scenes of coming years. The old ark never made such voyage as the cradle daily makes.

WITH every child we lose we see deeper into life, as with every added lens we pierce farther the sky.

GOD will accept your first attempt, not as a perfect work, but as a beginning. The beginning is the promise of the end. The seed always whispers "oak," though it is going into the ground, acorn. I am sure that the first little blades of wheat are just as pleasant to the farmer's eyes, as the whole field waving with grain.

We grieve that our days are so inharmonious. Our hearts are continually going in and out, as it were, of eclipses. Yesterday jostles to-day, and to-morrow will carry them both away captive.

May God make us patient to live. Not that we should not have aspirations; but till the flying comes, let us brood contentedly upon our nests.

When Allston died, he left many pictures which were mostly sketches, yet with here and there a part finished up with wonderful beauty. So I think Christians go to heaven with their virtues mostly in outline, only here and there a part completed. But "that which is in part shall be done away," and God shall finish the pictures in his own forms and colours.

Every use of the past which leaves you with the feeling of the past, is a wrong use. If you take the suffering and death of Christ in the old Jerusalem aright, they will lead you to the new Jerusalem, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Because the Bible came to us from the past, we are not to seek God backwards, as if Christ were living in His eighteen hundred years ago, and Jehovah, wrapped in the mantle of four thousand years, dwelt upon Sinai. God is the eternal *now*, and we are to look up and forward for the ever-living Saviour.

A Christian man's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black, as the pattern needs; and in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colours were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colours.

No man is perfect. The ideal man is the whole Christian brotherhood. That alone presents God's idea in the creation of man.

What wonderful provision God has made for us, spreading out the Bible into types of nature!

What if every part of your house should begin to repeat the truths which have been committed to its symbolism? The lowest stone would say in silence of night, "Other foundation can no man lay." The corner-stone would catch the word, "Christ is the corner-stone." The door would add, "I am the door." The taper burning by your bedside would stream up a moment to tell you, "Christ is the light of the world." If you gaze upon your children, they reflect from their sweetly-sleeping faces the words of Christ, "Except ye become like little children." If, waking, you look towards your parents' couch, from that sacred place God calls himself your father and your mother. Disturbed by the crying of your children, who are affrighted in a dream, you rise to soothe them, and hear God saying, "So will I wipe away all tears from your eyes in heaven." Returning to your bed, you look from the window. Every star hails you, but, chiefest, "the bright and morning Star." By and by, flaming from the east, the flood of morning bathes your dwelling, and calls you forth to the cares of the day, and then you remember that God is the sun, and that heaven is bright with His presence. Drawn by hunger, you approach the table. The loaf whispers as you break it, "Broken for you," and the wheat of the loaf sighs, "Bruised and ground for you." The water that quenches your thirst says, "I am the water of life." If you wash your hands, you can but remember the teachings of spiritual purity. If you wash your feet, that hath been done sacredly by Christ as a memorial. The very roof of your dwelling hath its utterance, and bids you look for the day when God's house shall receive its top-stone.

Go forth to your labour, and what thing can you see that hath not its message? The ground is full of sympathy. The flowers have been printed with teachings. The trees, that only seem to shake their leaves in sport, are framing Divine sentences. The birds tell of heaven with their love-warblings in the green twilight. The sparrow is a preacher of truth. The hen clucks and broods her chickens, unconscious that to the end of the world she is part and parcel of a revelation of God to man. The sheep that bleat from the pastures, the hungry wolves that blink in the forest, the serpent that glides noiselessly in the grass, the raven that flies heavily across the field, the lily over which his shadow passes, the plough, the sickle, the wain, the barn, the flail, the thrashing floor, all of them are consecrated priests, unrobed

teachers, revelators that see no vision themselves, but that bring to us thoughts of truth, contentment, hope, and love. All are ministers of God. The whole earth doth praise Him, and show forth His glory!

Dr. Kane, finding a flower under the Humboldt glacier, was more affected by it because it grew beneath the lip and cold bosom of the ice than he would have been by the most gorgeous garden bloom. So some single struggling grace in the heart of one far removed from Divine influences, may be dearer to God than a whole catalogue of virtues in the life of one more favoured of heaven.

* Let us interrupt the flow of the week, and rear up another Sabbath in the middle of it. And, as those who swim mighty streams do stop, panting, to rest upon some midway rock ere they plunge again into the tide, so let us rest here, lifted up above the tumult of earthly care, and gain strength, before we go down again into the dark ford, for the farther shore—the Sabbath.

If a bell were hung high in heaven which the angels swung whenever a man was lost, how incessantly would it toll in days of prosperity for men gone down, for honour lost, for integrity lost, and for manhood lost, beyond recall! But in times of disaster the sounds would intermit, and the angels looking down would say, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Do you ask me whether I would help a slave to gain his freedom? I answer, I would help him with heart, and hand, and voice. I would do for him what I shall wish I had done, when, having lost his dusky skin and blossomed into the light of eternity, he and I shall stand before our Master, who will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto him, slave as he was, ye did it unto me."

There is an ugly kind of forgiveness in this world—a kind of hedgehog forgiveness, shot out like quills. Men take one who has offended, and set him down before the blowpipe of their indignation, and scorch him, and burn his fault into him; and when they have kneaded him sufficiently with their fiery fists, then—they forgive him.

* Addressed to the Church at a Wednesday evening lecture.

THE man who throws his plans into the current of Divine Providence, will never want room to float his hull.

MEN often abstain from the grosser vices as too coarse and common for their appetites, while the vices which are frosted and ornamented are served up to them as delicacies.

IT is with the singing of a congregation as with the sighing of the wind in the forest, where the notes of the million rustling leaves, and the boughs striking upon each other, altogether make a harmony, no matter what be the individual discords.

LAWS and institutions are constantly tending to gravitate. Like clocks, they must be occasionally cleansed, and wound up, and set to true time.

MANY people are afraid to embrace religion, for fear they shall not succeed in maintaining it.

Does the spring say, "I will not come unless I can bring all fruits and sheaves under my wings?" No. She casts down loving glances in February, and in March she ventures near in mild days, but is beaten back and overthrown by storm and wind. Yet she returns, and finally yields the earth to April, far readier for life than she found it. The rains are still cold, but the grass is growing green, and the buds are swelling. In May the air is yet chilly, but it has the odour of flowers, and every day grows warmer till the delicious June, when all is bloom and softness, and even the storms have nourishment in them. Then come the glowing July and the fervid August, followed by the glorious autumn of harvest and victory!

And shall nature do so much, while we dare not attempt to overcome the coldness and deadness of our hearts, and to fill them with the summer of love?

WHEN flowers are full of heaven-descended dews, they always hang their heads; but men hold theirs the higher the more they receive, getting proud as they get full.

THE aster has not wasted spring and summer because it has not blossomed. It has been all the time preparing for what is to follow, and in autumn it is the glory of the field, and only the frost lays it low. So there are many people who must

live forty or fifty years, and have the crude sap of their natural dispositions changed and sweetened before the blossoming time can come; but their life has not been wasted.

When people undertake to restrain themselves without knowing how, they are often worse off than if they had let themselves alone; just as a stream, when you throw a little dam across it, bubbles and plunges all the more.

Worldly joy is like the songs which peasants sing, full of melodies and sweet airs. Christian joy has its sweet airs too; but they are augmented to harmonies, so that he who has it goes to heaven, not to the voice of a single flute, but to that of a whole band of instruments, discoursing wondrous music.

God puts the excess of hope in one man in order that it may be a medicine to the man who is despondent.

If some cynical people had been by when God was making the human mind, as He took up Faith, they would have said, "Put in that," and as He took up Conscience, "Put in that," and Fear, "Put in that;" but as He took up Mirthfulness, they would have touched His arm, and said, "Don't put that in!" Fortunately, such people were not the counsellors of God. Mirthfulness is in the mind, and you cannot get it out. It is the blessed spirit that God has set in the mind to dust it, to enliven its dark places, and to drive asceticism, like a foul fiend, out at the back door. It is just as good, in its place, as Conscience or Veneration. Praying can no more be made a substitute for smiling, than smiling can for praying.

Do not be troubled because you have not great virtues. God made a million spears of grass where He made one tree. The earth is fringed and carpeted, not with forests, but with grasses. Only have enough of little virtues and common fidelities, and you need not mourn because you are neither a hero or a saint.

I used to think the Lord's Prayer was a short prayer; but as I live longer, and see more of life, I begin to believe there is no such thing as getting through it. If a man, in praying that prayer, were to be stopped by every word until he had thoroughly prayed it, it would take him a lifetime. "Our

Father"—there would be a wall a hundred feet high in just those two words to most men. If they might say, "Our Tyrant," or "Our Monarch," or even "Our Creator," they could get along with it; but "Our *Father*"—why, a man is almost a saint who can pray that.

You read, "Thy will be done," and you say to yourself, "Oh, I can pray that;" and all the time your mind goes round and round in immense circuits and far-off distances; but God is continually bringing the circuits nearer to you, till He says, "How is it about your temper and your pride? How is it about your business and your daily life?"

This is a revolutionary petition. It would make many a man's shop and store tumble to the ground to utter it. Who can stand at the end of the avenue along which all his pleasant thoughts and wishes are blossoming like flowers, and send these terrible words, "Thy will be done," crashing down through it? I think it is the most fearful prayer to pray in the world.

Every well-doer on the face of the earth is my blood relation through Jesus Christ. I feel his heart beating right up to my ribs, and mine beating back to his. All the good passed away and transfigured into glory are mine. My own mother is not more really, though more tenderly, mine, than is the mother of St. Chrysostom or St. Augustine; and I belong to every man at whose soul God's angel has knocked, so that he has received the Divine life.

When a man's pride is thoroughly subdued, it is like the sides of Mount Etna. It was terrible while the eruption lasted and the lava flowed; but when that is past, and the lava is turned into soil, it grows vineyards and olive trees up to the very top.

Men have different spheres. It is for some to evolve great moral truths, as the heavens evolve stars, to guide the sailor on the sea and the traveller on the desert; and it is for some, like the sailor and the traveller, simply to be guided.

You are in a hurry to see the world in its latter-day glory; and well you may be, for you have but a little time. But God is not in a hurry. There is no such thing as *time* with God. The world is His seed-bed. He has planted

deep and multitudinously, and many things there are which have not yet come up. Some things are just sprouted, and some have blossomed; and yet, because the sheeted prairie of life is not covered with the flowers of love, men say, "It will never come. The world will be burned up first."

The world is preparing day by day for the millennium, but you do not see it. Every season forms itself a year in advance. The coming summer lays out her work during the autumn, and buds and roots are forespoken. Ten million roots are pumping in the streets; do you hear them? Ten million buds are forming in the axils of the leaves; do you hear the sound of the saw or the hammer? All next summer is at work in the world, but it is unseen by us, and so "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

If any man is rich and powerful, he comes under that law of God by which the higher branches must take the burnings of the sun, and shade those that are lower; by which the tall trees must protect the weak plants beneath them.

Patriotism, in our day, is made to be an argument for all public wrong, and all private meanness. For the sake of country a man is told to yield everything that makes the land honourable. For the sake of country a man must submit to ignominy that will lead to the ruin of the state through disgrace of the citizen. There never was a man so unpatriotic as Christ was. Old Jerusalem ought to have been everything to Him. The laws and institutions of His country ought to have been more to Him than all the men in His country. They were not, and the Jews hated Him; but the common people, like the ocean waters, moved in tides towards His heavenly attraction wherever He went.

Our children that lie in the cradle are ours, and bear in them those lines which shall yet make them to appear, the boy like the father, and the daughter like the mother; and we are God's, growing up, we trust, into the lineaments which shall make us like unto Him. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Whenever education and refinement grow away from the common people, they are growing towards selfishness, which is the monster evil of the world.

Men who walk on tiptoe all through life, holding up their skirts for fear they shall touch their fellows, who are delicate and refined in feeling, and who ring all the bells of taste high up in their own belfry, where no one else can hear them,—these dainty fools are the greatest sinners of all, for they use their higher faculties to serve the devil with.

MAN is God's creation. Everything else is the nursery and nurse of man.

I NEVER knew my mother. She died when I was three years old, that she might be an angel to me all my life. But one day, in after-years, turning over a pile of old letters in my father's study, I found a package of her letters to him, beginning with her first acquaintance with him, and coming down into her married life; and as I read those pages, at last I knew my mother.

What these letters were to her life, that are the four Gospels to the life of Christ. But I remember that there was one letter in which she first spoke freely and frankly of her love. That, to me, is the Gospel of John. It is God's love-letter to the world.

A MAN'S purpose of life should be like a river, which was born of a thousand little rills in the mountains; and when at last it has reached its manhood in the plain, though, if you watch it, you shall see little eddies that seem as if they had changed their minds, and were going back again to the mountains, yet all its mighty current flows changeless to the sea. If you build a dam across it, in a few hours it will go over it with a voice of victory. If tides check it at its mouth, it is only that when they ebb it can sweep on again to the ocean. So goes the Amazon or the Orinoco across a continent—never losing its way or changing its direction for the thousand streams that fall into it on the right hand and on the left, but only using them to increase its force, and bearing them onward in its resistless channel.

A NOBLE man compares and estimates himself by an idea which is higher than himself, and a mean man by one which is lower than himself. The one produces aspiration; the other ambition. Ambition is the way in which a vulgar man aspires.

From the beginning I educated myself to speak along the line, and in the current of my moral convictions; and though, in later days it has carried me through places where there were some batterings and bruisings, yet I have been supremely grateful that I was led to adopt this course. I would rather speak the truth to ten men, than blandishments and lying to a million. Try it, ye who think there is nothing in it; try what it is to speak with God behind you—to speak so as to be only the arrow in the bow which the Almighty draws.

A Christian had better go to the theatre than to go home whining because he *can't* go. If it is worth while to do anything for Christ, it is worth while to do it with your head up, and with your whole heart.

It takes only one good thorough frost to cut all the flowers out of the garden—no thanks to the second; so one thoroughly-detected dissimulation in love, and honey is vinegar, and love is gall.

Oh, let the soul alone. Let it go to God as best it may. It is entangled enough. It is hard enough for it to rise above the distractions which environ it. Let a man teach the rain how to fall, the clouds how to shape themselves and move their airy rounds, the seasons how to cherish and garner the universal abundance, but let him not teach a soul to pray, on whom the Holy Ghost doth brood.

In autumnal mornings mists settle over the Connecticut Valley, and lie cold and damp upon the meadows and the hill sides, and it is not till the sun rises and shines down warm upon them that they begin to move; and then there are swayings, and wreathings, and openings, till at length the spirit which has tormented the valley can stay no longer, but rises and disappears in the air. So is it when the Sun of Righteousness shines upon the troubles which brood over our souls. Shining but a little, they only fluctuate; but if the Sun will shine long, they lift themselves and vanish in the unclouded heaven.

Selfishness is that detestable vice which no one will forgive in others, and no one is without in himself.

Like a plant in the tropics which all the year round is

bearing flowers, and ripening seeds, and letting them fly, so the heart is always shaking off memories and dropping associations. And as the wind which serves to prostrate a plant is only a sower coming forth to sow its seeds, planting some of them in rock crevices, some by river courses, some among mossy stones, some under warm hedges, and some in garden and open field,—so it is with our experiences of life, that sway and bow us either with joy or sorrow. They plant everything about us with heart seeds. Thus a house becomes sacred. Every room has a thousand memories. Every door and window is clustered with associations. And when, after long years, we go back to the house of our infancy, faces look out upon us, and an invisible multitude stand in gate and portal to welcome us, and we hear airy voices speaking again the old words of our childhood. Every man has a silent and solitary literature written by his heart upon the tables of stone in nature; and next to God's finger, a man's heart writes the most memorable things.

When the people pass wise and needful laws, but leave them without public sentiment, it is as if a child were born into an exhausted receiver instead of a cradle.

If there is one word that is universally significant of love, peace, refinement, social amenity, friendship, pure society, joy, it is the table. Such power has the heart to clothe the most unseemly things with its own vines and fragrant flowers, that we have not only forgotten that eating is an animal act, but we have come to associate everything that is sweet and beautiful with it. We no longer think of appetite, but of love. It is not food, but society that we have. We cover the merest animal necessities with such sympathies, tastes, conversations, and gaieties, that the table, the symbol of appetite, has cleared itself from all grossness, and stands, in the language of the world, as the centre of social joy. A feast becomes sacred to hospitality. A festival is a religious observance.

A man living at a hotel is like a grape vine in a flower-pot—moveable, carried around from place to place, docked at the root and short at the top. Nowhere can a man get real root-room, and spread out his branches till they touch the morning and the evening, but in his own house.

As flowers never put on their best clothes for Sunday, but

wear their spotless raiment and exhale their odour every day, so let your Christian life, free from stain, ever give forth the fragrance of the love of God.

When the absent are spoken of, some will speak gold of them, some silver, some iron, some lead, and some always speak dirt, for they have a natural attraction towards what is evil, and think it shows penetration in them. As a cat watching for mice does not look up though an elephant goes by, so they are so busy mousing for defects, that they let great excellences pass them unnoticed. I will not say it is not *Christian* to make beads of others' faults, and tell them over every day; I say it is *infernal*. If you want to know how the devil feels, you *do know* if you are such an one.

The more important an animal is to be, the lower is its start. Man, the noblest of all, is born lowest. The next thing below a babe is nothing, and the next thing above a man is an angel.

Looked at without educated associations, there is no difference between a man in bed and a man in a coffin. And yet, such is the power of the heart to redeem the animal life, that there is nothing more exquisitely refined, and pure, and beautiful, than the chamber of the house. The couch! From the day that the bride sanctifies it to the day when the aged mother is borne from it, it stands clothed with loveliness and dignity. Cursed be the tongue that dares to speak evil of the household bed. By its side oscillates the cradle. Not far from it is the crib. In this sacred precinct, the mother's chamber, lies the heart of the family. Here the child learns its prayer. Hither night by night angels troop. It is the holy of holies.

Wherever I find truth, I will appropriate it, for it is an estray from God's Word, and belongs to me and to all. Eminent masters, parties, and sects, claim truths as theirs, because they have most fully expounded them; but men never make truths; they only recognize the value of this currency of God. They find truths as men sometimes find bills, in the street, and only recognize the value of that which other parties have drawn.

Very few men acquire wealth in such a manner as to

receive pleasure from it. Just as long as there is the enthusiasm of the chase they enjoy it; but when they begin to look around, and think of settling down, they find that that part by which joy enters is dead in them. They have spent their lives in heaping up colossal piles of treasure, which stand, at the end, like the pyramids in the desert sands, holding only the dust of kings.

God has put the veil of secrecy before the soul for its preservation; and to thrust it rudely aside, without reason, would be suicidal. Neither here, nor, as I think, hereafter, will all our thoughts and feelings lie open to the world.

The common school stands on the threshold of society, and throws each generation back to the one starting-point, and says to it, "Now come up because of what is in you." Who can estimate the power of an institution that is continually evening one end of life, but leaving the other to shoot up as plants do from the common soil?

What would the nightingale care if the toad despised his singing? He would sing on, and leave the cold toad to his dank shadows. And what care I for the sneers of men who grovel upon earth? I will still sing on into the ear and bosom of God.

Men do not avail themselves of the riches of God's grace. They love to nurse their cares, and seem as uneasy without some fret, as an old friar would be without his hair girdle. They are commanded to cast their cares upon the Lord; but, even when they attempt it, they do not fail to catch them up again, and think it meritorious to walk burdened. They take God's ticket to heaven, and then put their baggage on their shoulders, and tramp, tramp, the whole way there afoot.

The stream of life forks; and religon is apt to run in one channel, and business in another.

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend of his faults. If you are angry with a man, or hate him, it is not hard to go to him and stab him with words; but so to love a man that you cannot bear to see the stain of sin upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving

words,—that *is* friendship. But few have such friends. Our enemies usually teach us what we are at the point of the sword.

I THINK I heard a conversation in the leaves this morning, as I came to church. The buds that had lain all winter in their wrappings, as under roofs and blankets, were beginning to say to each other, "Is it not March? Is it not time for us to unfold ourselves, and expand our leaves in fragrance to the air?"

But one tiny bud answered, "I can never unfold to the sun and the air these dear little leaves, that have lain so long in my bosom. I could not bear such publicity. I must keep their fragrance still." And the sun and the wind laughed; for they knew that when they should shine and blow upon the bud, and fill up and swell those tiny leaves, it would open from the necessity of its nature, and that when they were swimming in a bath of solar light, they would give out their odour unconsciously to every breeze.

So many a heart says, "I could not bear to have my sweet buds of feeling exposed, through profession of Christianity, to the gaze of the world. I will keep them safely hid in my bosom, and be a Christian in secret." But when the winds of heaven blow upon them, and the sun of God's love shines, they will become vocal, and must needs give themselves expression.

THERE are many here to-day who know not yet what fruit they shall bear; may the gracious Husbandman take care of all these tender shoots and buds of spring! And there are those who are in the summer of their growth, and who spread abroad their leaves and expand their blossoms; may God grant them the gracious rains of heaven, that they may be nourished, and sustained, and brought to all perfection! And there are those who stand in autumn, with clustering fruits and glowing colours; may He minister to them all those influences which are needful for the autumn of their experience, and bring them gloriously to the end of the harvest! And there are those who are in life's winter, and whose leaves have fallen, and through whose unclothed boughs the sunlight shines; O Thou who art the God of winter as well as of summer, be very near to them till Thou dost take them to the land where no winter comes!

Amid our imperfect utterances, let us comfort ourselves with the thought of that realm where thought shall speak without the need of a tongue, and feeling shall speak, and the whole life shall be an anthem of praise.

Our most exalted feelings are not meant to be the common food of daily life. Contentment is more satisfying than exhilaration; and contentment means simply the sum of small and quiet pleasures. We ought not to seek too high joys. We may be bright without transfiguration. The even flow of constant cheerfulness strengthens; while great excitements, driving us with fierce speed, both rack the ship and end often in explosions. If we were just ready to break out of the body with delight, I know not but we should disdain many things important to be done. Low measures of feeling are better than ecstasies, for ordinary life. God sends His rains in gentle drops, else flowers would be beaten to pieces.

Sink the Bible to the bottom of the ocean, and man's obligations to God would be unchanged. He would have the same path to tread, only his lamp and his guide would be gone; he would have the same voyage to make, only his compass and chart would be overboard.

Love is ownership. We own whom we love. The universe is God's because he loves.

* Christian brethren, in heaven you are known by the name of Christ. On earth, for convenience' sake, you are known by the name of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and the like. Let me speak the language of heaven, and call you, simply, Christians. Whoever of you has known the name of Christ, and feels Christ's life beating within him, is invited to remain, and sit with us at the table of the Lord.

† My friends, my heart is large to-day. I am like a tree upon which rains have fallen till every leaf is covered with drops of dew; and no wind goes through the boughs but I hear the pattering of some thought of joy and gratitude. I love you all more than ever before. You are crystalline to me. Your faces are radiant; and I look through your eyes

* Invitation to the communion service.

† At communion, when one hundred were added to the Church.

as through windows into heaven. I behold in each of you an imprisoned angel, that is yet to burst forth, and to love and shine in the better sphere.

THE whole earth is like a caldron, boiling and seething with human passions. Man is at war with man, and everywhere are rage and animosity. When, from God's fatherhood, shall come the truth of our brotherhood? Lord Jesus, what hast Thou done since Thou wentest away? Hast Thou forgotten Thine errand hither? Art Thou not weary of this globe, which swings about Thy throne on its bitter path with anthems of pain and woe? Hasten the time when the whole world, enchoired by love, shall go its golden way, singing Thy praise and its joy!

THE real man is one who always finds excuses for others, but never excuses himself.

MEN'S convictions of sin differ with their characters. One man says, "In such a sermon, a lion-like conviction sprang out upon me, and seized my soul in its grasp, and had nearly torn it asunder." And another says, "The twilight of God's love fell upon me; but when the eclipse was over, the sun shone out again, and I was happy." Terror, or only sadness, anguish, grief, and love, are all alike really conviction.

WE have known men, upon whose grounds were old, magnificent trees, of centuries' growth, lifted up into the air with vast breadth, and full of twilight at midday, who cut down all these mighty monarchs, and cleared the ground bare; and then, when the desolation was completed, and the fierce summer gazed full into their faces with its fire, they bethought themselves of shade, and forthwith set out a generation of thin, shadowless sticks, and pined and waited till they should stretch out their boughs with protection, and darken the ground with grateful shadow. Such folly is theirs who refuse the tree of life, the shadow of the Almighty, and sit, instead, under feeble trees of their own planting, whose tops will never be broad enough to shield them, and whose boughs will never discourse to them the music of the air.

The mountains lift their crests so high, that weary clouds, which have no rest in the sky, love to come to them, and, wrapping about their tops, distil their moisture upon

them. Thus mountains hold commerce with God's invisible ocean, and, like good men, draw supplies from the unseen. So, in times of drought below, the rocks are always wet, the mountain moss is always green, the seams and crevices are always dripping, and veins are throbbing a full pulse, while all the summer down in the plains faints for want of moisture. In some virgin gorge, unwedded by the sun, cold rills bubble up and issue forth upon their errand. Could one who would build his house below but meet these springs in the mountains, and lay his artificial channels to their very sources, he would not know when drought came, for they never grow dry so long as clouds brood the mountain tops. Day and night they gush and fall with liquid plash, an unheard music, except when thirsty birds, to whose song the rivulet has been a bass, stoop to drink at their crystal edges.

Artificial cisterns dry up and crack for dryness; but this mountain fountain comes, night and day, with cool abundance. While others with weary strokes force up from deep wells a penurious supply of turbid water, he that has joined himself to the mountain spring has its voice continually in his dwelling, night and day, summer and winter, without work or stroke of labouring pump, clear, sweet, and cheerful, running of its own accord, and singing at its work, more musical than any lute, and bringing in its song suggestions of its home—the dark recess, the rock which was its father, the cloud which was its mother, and the teeming heaven bright and broad above both rock and cloud.

With such a spring,—near, accessible, urging itself upon eye and ear,—how great would be his folly who should abandon it, and fill his attic with a leaden cistern, which for ever leaked when full, and was dry when it did not leak! Yet this is what we have done. We have forsaken God, "the fountain of living waters, and hewed us out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Happiness is not the end of life; character is. This world is not a platform where you will hear Thalberg-piano-playing. It is a piano manufactory, where are dust, and shavings, and boards, and saws, and files, and rasps, and sand-papers. The perfect instrument and the music will be hereafter.

God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You *must* take it. The only choice is *how*.

The other day, in walking down the street, a little beggar boy—or one who might have begged, so ragged was he—having discovered that I loved flowers, came and put into my hand a faded little sprig which he had somewhere found. I did not look directly at the scrawny, withered branch, but beheld it through the medium of the boy's heart, seeing what he would have given, not what he gave; and so looking, the shrivelled stem was laden with blossoms of beauty and odour. And if I, who am cold, and selfish, and ignorant, receive so graciously the offering of a poor child, with what tender joy must our heavenly Father receive the sincere tributes of His creatures when He looks through the medium of His infinite love and compassion!

Christ does not say, "Take the noblest things of life, and bring them perfect to Me, and I will receive them." He says, "Take the lowest and most disagreeable thing; and if you bring it cheerfully, for My sake, it shall be to Me a flower of remembrance, and I will press it in the book of life, and keep it for ever."

Go, then, search for flowers to bring to Christ; and if you cannot find even road-side or pasture weeds—if there are but nettles and briars, and you are willing for His sake to thrust your hand into the thorn bush, and bring a branch from thence, He will take it lovingly, and cherish it evermore.

Let me fall into the hands of God, and not of man; yet even there, such is the heart's weakness that we must often cry out, "Oh, remember that we are but dust." Let God deal with me in the street, in the door-yard,—yea, let Him come into the house, and deal with me in the parlour,—but let Him not come into my chamber, and deal with me in the cradle. Then He is a terrible God; and I tremble, and shrink away from His presence.

There is an anger that is damnable; it is the anger of selfishness. There is an anger that is majestic as the frown of Jehovah's brow; it is the anger of truth and love.

If a man meets with injustice, it is not required that he shall not be roused to meet it; but if he is angry after he has had time to think upon it, that is sinful. The flame is not wrong, but the coals are.

There are men who imagine they should do well enough

if they could throw the Bible overboard, and the ministers after it, and sink the whole Church in the sea. It is as if a man with a shattered limb should think to better himself by thrusting the doctors and their instruments out of doors. They did not break his leg, but only propose to set it. Under the hand of the poorest of them, the limb will be better than if the shattered bone were left to heal unsplintered.

It is supposed that if a man is a Christian, he must perform certain professional duties which are no more to be expected of a man who is not a Christian than a lawyer's duties are expected of a mechanic. Now, all the great duties of a Christian life are no more incumbent upon Christians than upon other men; for men are bound to be and do right on the religious scale of rectitude, not because they are *Christians*, but because they are *men*. Religious obligations took hold of us when we were born. They waited for us as the air did. They have their sources back of volition, back of consciousness, just as attraction has. Though a man declares himself an atheist, it in no way alters his obligations. Right and wrong do not spring from the nature of the Church. Obligation lies deeper than that. The Church is a mere organization to help a man to fulfil his duties; it is not the source from whence those duties sprang. If there is anything in your business, or your character, which you would feel that you ought to change if you were a Christian, you ought to change it now. It is as much the worldling's duty to love God and to obey His laws, as it is the Christian's. An unpraising heart! You do not need to have been baptized, to be damned, if you have that.

As we do not keep tinder in every box in the house, so we do not keep the sense of anger in every faculty. When one comes against the door of some faculties with an injury, we look over the railing and say,—

"I'll forgive you for that, for you did not get in."

But by and by, when the faculty where we are sensitive is entered, then we grind our teeth and say,—

"I could have forgiven him for anything but that!"

We must not arrogate to ourselves a spirit of forgiveness, until we have been touched to the quick where we are sensitive, and borne it meekly; and meekness is not mere white-facedness, a mere contemplative virtue; it is main-

taining peace and patience in the midst of pelting provocations.

Mozart and Raphael! As long as the winds make the air give forth sounds, and the sun paints the earth with colours, so long shall the world not let these names die.

See to it that each hour's feelings, and thoughts, and actions are pure and true; then will your life be such. The mightiest maze of magnificent harmonies that ever a Beethoven gave to the world is but single notes, and all its complicated and interlacing strains are resolvable into individualities. The wide pasture is but separate spears of grass; the sheeted bloom of the prairies but isolated flowers.

The vertical power of Christianity with Christians will measure its horizontal power in the world.

We rejoice in God since he has taught us that everything which is true in us, is but a faint expression of what is in Him. And thus all our joys become to us the echo of higher joys, and our very life is as a dream of that nobler life to which we shall waken when we die.

We are apt to believe in Providence so long as we have our own way; but if things go awry, then we think if there is a God He is in heaven, and not on earth.

The cricket in the spring builds his little house in the meadow, and chirps for joy, because all is going so well with him. But when he hears the sound of the plough a few furrows off, and the thunder of the oxen's tread, then the skies begin to look dark, and his heart fails him. The plough comes craunching along, and turns his dwelling bottom side up, and as he goes rolling over and over without a home, he says,—

"Oh, the foundations of the world are destroyed, and everything is going to ruin!"

But the husbandman who walks behind the plough, singing and whistling as he goes, does he think the foundations of the world are breaking up? Why, he does not so much as know there was any house or cricket there. He thinks of the harvest which is to follow the track of the plough; and the cricket, too, if he will but wait, will find a thousand blades of grass where there was but one before.

We are like the crickets. If anything happens to overthrow *our* plans, we think all is going to ruin.

There is always somebody to believe in any one who is uppermost.

There is no greater crime than to stand between a man and his development; to take any law or institution and put it around him like a collar, and fasten it there, so that as he grows and enlarges, he presses against it till he suffocates and dies.

We ought not to judge men by their absolute excellence, but by the distance which they have travelled from the point at which they started. There are some men whom God has so royally endowed that they are like a bird sitting on the topmast branch of the forest, and if God says to it, "Mount up," it has nothing to do but to spring into the air, singing as it goes towards heaven. But others are like a bird upon the ground, that has to disentangle itself from the bushes, and then to work its way among the darkling boughs, before it can soar. The one may have done better by his outward wings, but the better inward wings of purpose and endeavour beat far stronger in the other, and bring him quite as near to God; for God dwells beneath the shade, as much as above the forest.

We are all building a soul-house for eternity; yet with what different architecture and what various care!

What if a man should see his neighbour getting workmen and building materials together, and should say to him, "What are you building?" and he should answer, "I don't exactly know. I am waiting to see what will come of it." And so walls rush up, and room is added to room, while the man looks idly on, and all the bystanders exclaim, "What a fool he is!" Yet this is the way many men are building their characters for eternity, adding room to room, without plan or aim, and thoughtlessly waiting to see what the effect will be. Such builders will never dwell in "the house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Many men build as cathedrals were built, the part nearest the ground finished; but that part which soars towards heaven, the turrets and the spires, for ever incomplete.

A kitchen, a cellar, a bar, and a bedroom; these are the

whole of some men, the only apartments in their soul-house.

Many men are mere warehouses full of merchandise—the head, the heart, are stuffed with goods. Like those houses in the lower streets of the city which were once family dwellings, but are now used for commercial purposes, there are apartments in their souls which were once tenanted by taste, and love, and joy, and worship, but they are all deserted now, and the rooms are filled with earthy and material things.

He who selfishly hoards his joys, thinking thus to increase them, is like a man who looks at his granary, and says, "Not only will I protect my grain from mice and birds, but neither the ground nor the mill shall have it." And so, in the spring, he walks around his little pit of corn, and exclaims, "How wasteful are my neighbours, throwing away whole handfuls of grain!" But autumn comes; and while he has only his few poor bushels, their fields are yellow with an abundant harvest. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

Christians! it is your duty not only to be good, but to shine; and, of all the lights which you kindle on the face, joy will reach farthest out to sea, where troubled mariners are seeking the shore. Even in your deepest griefs, rejoice in God. As waves phosphoresce, let joys flash from the swing of the sorrows of your souls.

In human governments, justice is central, and love incidental. In the Divine government, love is the central element, and justice only incidental. God wishes to exhaust all means of kindness before His hand takes hold on justice. When the waves of penalty begin to come in in fearful tides, then He banks up against them. His goodness is the levee between justice and the sinful soul.

Does love implead with God for us, as it does in us for those we hold dear? Does He look wistfully forth to see when such and such an one shall leave earth and come to Him—as parents, waiting for vacation, look every hour along the road to watch for their children!

If we are Christ's, every passing day brings us nearer to Him, and He is gathering up our treasures in heaven. When

anything falls overboard from a ship upon the sea, it goes astern; but when anything drops into the ocean of life, it is taken up, and carried forward to wait for us. And when that which we call death, comes, it is Christ's summons. He wants us to come to Him. To some of us it has been a long voyage. A few more watches, and it will be ended, and there will arise the cry of "Land, ho!" more rapturous than ever greeted an earthly shore. And then may we hear, sweeter than the songs of myriad angels, the voice of One who has longed for us, and for whom we have been homesick, —the voice of our Saviour,—saying to us, "Welcome, ye blessed of my Father. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

God sends Experience to paint men's portraits. Does some longing youth look at the settled face of a Washington, whose lineaments have been transmitted to us by the artist's skill, and strive to wear as noble a mien? That look,—the winds of the Alleghanies, the trials of the Jersey winter, the sufferings at Cambridge, the conflicts with Congress, wrought it out; and he who would gain it must pass through as stern a school.

I sometimes go musing along the street to see how few people there are whose faces look as though any joy had come down and sung in their souls. I can see lines of thought, and of care, and of fear,—money lines, shrewd, grasping lines,—but how few happy lines! The rarest feeling that ever lights the human face is the contentment of a loving soul. Sit for an hour on the steps of the Exchange in Wall Street, and you will behold a drama which is better than a thousand theatres, for all the actors are real.

The light falls on the skin of the Anglo-Saxon, and the rays are reflected, and he is white. The same light falls on the skin of the negro, and the rays are absorbed, and he is black; and morals and religion, on a national scale, are modified by a reflecting or non-reflecting cuticle. If the African race had been as handsome as the Circassian, there would not to-day be a single slave among them. Beauty is omnipotent. Pards and tigers are fabled to have drawn the cars of the wreathed and graceful Bacchanals, in ancient song; and to-day, among unsanctified men, truth and justice love beauty better than they love themselves.

Whether the Africans are an inferior race or not, it is

evident that our destiny in some respects is bound up with them, and the study of their interests is the study of our salvation. When a ship casts its passengers overboard in a storm, there may be sick and helpless ones among them who could not for a moment compete with the robust swimmers; but the feeblest of them, by attaching themselves to the swimmers, may embarrass them, and make them go down. So this African race, in the Omnipotent hand, may be the instrument for our destruction, if we are to be destroyed. They may cling to our feet, and entangle us in their final miseries.

Truths are first clouds, then rain, then harvests and food. The philosophy of one century is the common sense of the next. Men are called fools, in one age, for not knowing what they were called fools for averring in the age before. We should so live and labour in our time that what came to us as seed may go to the next generation as blossom, and that what came to us as blossom may go to them as fruit. This is what we mean by progress.

Death is the dropping of the flower that the fruit may swell.

If men whose sympathy is strong for their fellows have been to churches where they have heard the preaching of dry doctrines,—if the tree of life has been to them a girdled tree, leafless, and without birds in its boughs,—they are very apt to ignore doctrine, and go to the opposite extreme, and say, "It's well enough to sing hymns, and there's no harm in prayers, perhaps; but the best hymns and prayers are to do good." It is very true that to love justice and to show mercy is more than all sacrifice of hymns and prayers; yet, as the world goes, I have noticed that most men decry the one, only for the sake of covering their neglect of the other.

I am suspicious of that Church whose members are one in their beliefs and opinions. When a tree is dead, it will lie any way; alive, it will have its own growth. When men's deadness is in the Church, and their life elsewhere, all will be alike. They can be cut and polished any way. When they are alive, they are like a tropical forest—some shooting up, like the mahogany tree; some spreading, like the vine; some darkling, like the shrub; some lying, herb-like, on the

ground; but all obeying their own laws of growth—a common law of growth variously expressed in each—and so contributing to the richness and beauty of the wood.

It makes no difference what you call men—prince, peer, or slave. *Man* is that name of power which rises above them all, and gives to every one the right to be that which God meant he should be. No law, nor custom, nor opinion, nor prejudice, has the right to say to one man, "You may grow," and to another, "You may not grow," or, "You may grow in ten directions, and not in twenty;" or to the strong, "You may grow stronger," or to the weak, "You may never become strong." Launched upon the ocean of life, like an innumerable fleet, each man may spread what sails God has given him, whether he be pinnace, sloop, brig, bark, ship, or man-of-war; and no commodore or admiral may signal what voyage he shall make, or what canvas he shall carry.

God has given to men the great truths of liberty and equality, which are like mothers' breasts, carrying food for ages. Let us not fear that in our land they shall be overthrown or destroyed. Though we may go through dark times,—rocking times, when we are sea-sick,—yet the day shall come when there shall be no more oppression, but when, all over the world, there shall be a common people, sitting in a commonwealth, having a common Bible, a common God, and common peace and joy in a common brotherhood.

The world is so fruitful that we can hardly even blunder without bringing forth some good. We can take up no scheme, however wild and impracticable, but it will strike off some flower or fruit from the tree of knowledge.

It often happens that the coming of Christ to His disciples, for their relief, is that which frightens them most, because they do not know the extent of God's wardrobe; for I think that as a king might never wear the same garment but once, in order to show his riches and magnificence, so God comes to us in all exigencies, but never twice alike. He sometimes puts on the garments of trouble; and when we are calling upon Him as though He were yet in heaven, He is walking by our side; and that from which we are praying

God to deliver us is often but God himself. Thus it is with us as with the children who are terrified by their dreams in the night, and scream for their parents, until, fully waking, behold they are in their parents' arms!

QUESTIONS of future society are too vast to be determined by the present. Society, like life, grows from a principle divinely implanted, and all we can do is to stimulate and tend it. God never gives us the light which our children need; He gives it to them.

THERE are multitudes of men like the summer vines, which never grow even ligneous, but stretch out a thousand little hands to grasp the stronger shrubs; and if they cannot reach them, they lie dishevelled in the grass, hoof-trodden, and beaten of every storm.

It does not tarnish bright gifts to hold them in restraint lest their heedless liberty should injure others. Men who would cheerfully forego lawful pleasures which injure the weak, often feel that it is reversing the law of growth, and the Divine method, to shape the pattern of our life, not upon the large pattern of our own powers, but upon the meagre pattern of the ignorant, the prejudiced, and the vulgar. And yet, every man should learn better from the nursery, in which God teaches men more deep theology than all books contain, of the nobleness of strength nourishing weakness, of knowledge careful of ignorance, and of experience waiting upon childhood, and, by serving it with all self-renunciation, gaining honour and greatness. As yet, the world will not understand that he governs whom love makes serviceable. The strong are few, the weak are many; and God appoints the strong to serve the weak, saying, "We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproach thee fell on me."

THERE are some who stand on a narrow strip of land between two dead seas, and drink their waters alternately. The past is filled with bitter regrets, and ghosts which will not be laid, but walk still to haunt them; and the future is filled with shadowy shapes, which beckon them forward to new suffering. There is a purgatory, and it is this: it

is the point where good, despaired of, touches evils remembered.

PIETY may be called the act of right growing. It is moving towards true attainment that constitutes it.

SUPPOSE a man should sail, all the boiling and blazing day, round and round an old Dutch ship in the harbour, and the next day you should see him, like a magnified fly, creeping up and down the masts and spars, and examining the rigging, and you should ask him what he was doing, and he should answer, "I have heard that this ship is a dull sailer, and I want to look at it and see." Could he ever find out in this way? No. Let him weigh anchor and spread the canvas, and take the wind and bear away, if he would know how she sails.

So, if a Christian would learn his true state, let him not row round and round the hull of his self-consciousness, and creep up and down the masts and spars of his feelings and affections; but let him spread the sails of resolution, and bear away on the ocean of duty. Then he shall know whether he be a dull or a fast sailer.

SOME regard religion as a sort of divine aura, which descends upon a man and encircles him, as silvery mists enwreathe autumnal mountain tops. There is a sense in which this is true. No one would become a Christian without the direct aid of the Holy Spirit, any more than a bud would become a blossom without the influence of the sun; but yet, personal religion is the result of personal choice.

A STATE in which the citizen is the pabulum of the state, will soon have nothing left to feed on.

THE Church was built to disturb the peace of man; but often it does not perform its duty, for fear of disturbing the peace of the Church. What kind of artillery practice would that be which declined to fire for fear of kicking over the gun carriages, or waking up the sentinels asleep at their posts?

A CHURCH may have a creed that shall be like Jacob's ladder, uniting earth and heaven, and angels of exposition

may run nimbly up and down upon it before the congregation; and yet, if there is no love in that Church, unlike the patriarch, it will never wake from its sleep, or lift its head from the pile of stones on which it lies.

Many men are swamped in the doctrines of election and predestination, but this is supreme impertinence. They are truths which belong to God, and if you are troubled by them, it is because you are meddling with what does not belong to you. You only need to understand that all God's agencies are to assist you in gaining your salvation, if you will but use them rightly. To doubt this is as if men in a boat, pulling against the tide, and, with all their efforts, going backwards every hour, should by and by find the current turning, and see the wind springing up with it and filling the sails, and hear the man at the helm exclaim, "Row away, boys! wind and tide are in your favour," and they should all say, "What shall we do with the oars? Do not the wind and the tide take away our free agency?"

When Christ came, it was not necessary for Him to teach that man was miserable, any more than it would be to demonstrate the presence of disease in an hospital of fevered, palsied patients; for, in addition to the woes of the individual, the world was a tangled web of misery. Each year travailed in pain, and passed the legacy to the next, and the centuries rolled on with this weight of woe. And still the world looks desolate. The ages seem only to burden it as they march over, while God's promises hang above it like stars, distant and cold. Yet we believe in Him, and like the prophets of old, we stand and cry, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

Character, like porcelain ware, must be painted before it is glazed. There can be no change after it is burned in.

We are not sent into life as a butterfly is sent into summer, gorgeously hovering over the flowers, as if the interior spirits of the rainbow had come down to greet these kisses of the season upon the ground; but to labour for the world's advancement, and to mould our characters into God's likeness, and so, through toil and achievement, to gain happiness. I would rather break stones upon the road, if it were not for the disgrace of being in a chain gang, than to be one

of those contemptible joy-mongers, who are so rich and so empty, that they are continually going about to find something to make them *happy*.

One should go to sleep at night as homesick passengers do, saying, "Perhaps in the morning we shall see the shore." To us who are Christians, it is not a solemn, but a delightful thought, that perhaps nothing but the opaque, bodily eye prevents us from beholding the gate which is open just before us, and nothing but the dull ear prevents us from hearing the ringing of those bells of joy which welcome us to the heavenly land. That we are so near death, is too good to be believed.

God does not refuse to make Himself known to man. He only will not do it by the symbolism of matter. He comes to us at once by the most natural course. We are in a transient state; our bodies are accidental, and God comes to us by that which is higher and truer—the intuitions of the soul.

Men's graces must get the better of their faults as a farmer's crop do of their weeds—by growth. When the corn is low, the farmer uses the plough to root up the weeds; but when it is high, and shakes its palm-like leaves in the wind, he says, "Let the corn take care of them," for the dense shadow of growing corn is as fatal to weeds as the edge of the sickle.

* In looking upon a congregation like this, it is natural to think of you as you appear in the world; here a merchant, there a teacher; here a mechanic, there an artist; here a shipmaster, there a banker. But to-night I seem to behold you in your higher relations, and you stand to me like living portraits on the background of eternity. I behold the lines of God in your faces. No longer are you to me men of the street, or of the house, but creatures of heaven; and, like a flock of birds in autumn sitting upon the bough, with wings half-lifted, waiting for the migratory hour, I see you just ready to take flight for the eternal land.

There is dew in one flower and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes

* At the close of a Sabbath evening sermon.

itself, and the drops run off. God rains His goodness and mercy as wide-spread as the dew, and if we lack them, it is because we will not open our hearts to receive them.

THE great men of earth are the shadowy men, who, having lived and died, now live again and for ever through their undying thoughts. Thus living, though their footfalls are heard no more, their voices are louder than the thunder, and unceasing as the flow of tides or air.

Moses was not half living when he was alive. His real life has been since he died. The prophets seemed almost useless in their time. They did little for themselves or for the Church of that day; but when you look at the life they have lived since, you shall find they have been God's pilots, guiding the Church through all perils. From their black bosoms they sent forth the blast of His lightning and the roar of His thunder; and to-day, if the Church needs rebuke and denunciation, it is they who must hurl it. I could have killed old Jeremiah, if I could have got at his ribs; but I should like to see the archer that could hit him now. Martin Luther was mighty when he lived; but the shadowy Luther is mightier than a regiment of fleshly Luthers. When he was on earth, he in some sense asked the pope leave to be, and the emperor and the elector leave to be; he asked the stream and the wheat to give him sustenance for a day; but now that his body is dead,—now that that rubbish is out of the way,—he asks no leave of pope, or elector, or emperor, but is the monarch of thought, and the noblest defender of the faith to the end of time.

I KNOW it is more agreeable to walk upon carpets than to lie upon dungeon floors; I know it is pleasant to have all the comforts and luxuries of civilization; but he who cares only for these things is worth no more than a butterfly, contented and thoughtless upon a morning flower; and who ever thought of rearing a tombstone to a last summer's butterfly?

WHAT we call wisdom is the result, not the residuum, of all the wisdom of past ages. Our best institutions are like young trees growing upon the roots of the old trunks that have crumbled away.

Do you ever reflect that your powers of accomplishment

are direct mercies from heaven? God does a more wonderful thing when He holds all your faculties in such nice adjustment and perfect play that you win success, than He would have done if He had wrought the fruit of that success Himself by a miracle.

To the infidel, Nature's voices are but a Babel din. Trees rustle, and brooks babble, and winds blow; but there is no meaning in their sound. To the Christian, all speak of God; and if it were not for the dimness of the natural eye, he might see His host of angels at their ministry. The tree stretches out its arm, laden with fruit, like the arm of God. The morning sprinkles him with dew, as with holy water; and he is sung to sleep, at evening, with songs like the lullaby of earthly parents to their children.

As flowers carry dewdrops, trembling on the edges of the petals, and ready to fall at the first waft of wind or brush of bird, so the heart should carry its beaded words of thanksgiving; and at the first breath of heavenly favour, let down the shower, perfumed with the heart's gratitude.

It is a solemn thing to be married; to have to preach to a congregation from your own loins; to have God put the hand of ordination on you in the birth of your children, and say to you, "Now art thou a priest unto those whom I have given thee."

If ever the stream of life should flow like crystal water over shining stones, it should be the stream of daily life in the family. If God has taught us all truth in teaching us to love, then He has given us an interpretation of our whole duty in our own households. We thank Him that we are not born as the partridge of the wood, or the ostrich of the desert, to be scattered every whither; but that we are grouped together and brooded by love, and reared day by day in that first of Churches, the family.

Of all earthly music, that which reaches the farthest into heaven is the beating of a loving heart.

In our land, men have classified themselves. We have aristocrats, but God made them; and there never will be a time when mightiness of soul shall not overshadow littleness of soul. It was designed that some should be high, some

intermediate, and some low; as trees are some forty, some a hundred, and some, the giant pines (how solitary their tops must be!) three hundred feet in height. But, however high their tops may reach, their roots rest in the same soil; as men, though they can grow and tower aloft as much as they please, still stand on a common level.

Do the best you can where you are; and, when that is accomplished, God will open a door for you, and a voice will call, "Come up hither into a higher sphere."

Simply weed a man, so that he shall produce nothing evil, but never plant him, so that he shall produce something good, and what is he worth? If this be cultivation, the Desert of Sahara is the most perfectly cultivated spot on the globe.

One of the best prayers ever offered is that which Christ himself hallowed, and set apart for our observation,—"God be merciful to me, a sinner!" There is no title, no "for ever and ever, Amen," to it. It is only the heart broken out of the man.

All the sobriety which religion needs or requires, is that which real earnestness produces. Tears and shadows are not needful to sobriety. Smiles and cheerfulness are as much its elements. When men say, Be sober, they usually mean, Be stupid; but when the Bible says, Be sober, it means, Rouse up, and let fly the earnestness and vivacity of life. The old, scriptural sobriety was effectual *doing;* the later, ascetic sobriety is effectual *dullness.*

One of our great troubles, as ministers, is to keep people from wishing to be awfully converted. There are those who will not come into God's kingdom unless they can come as Dante went into paradise—by going through hell. They wish to walk over the burning marl, and to snuff the sulphureous air.

If a man has done wrong, his own thoughts should turn him to reparation; but if they do not, the first intimation from the injured friend should suffice. But if he will come to no terms until the matter has passed through the court, and the execution is in the hands of the officer, and then, at length, in the final extremity, yields, his yielding is the basest

compliance of fear, and not the impulse of honour or conscience. And even more, men should be ashamed of needing deep convictions of sin before they repent before God. He must be a mean and a very wicked man who will not submit to God till he has been dealt with by such terrors. Magnanimous repentance never waits for the spur of remorse before it bounds towards the injured one, with confession and reconciliation.

I MARVEL how a woman, with her need of love, with her sensitive, yearning, clasping nature, can look into the face of the Lord Jesus, and not put her arms about His neck, and tell Him, with gushing love, that she commits herself, body and soul, into His sacred keeping!

* THIS concert, I perceive by the notice, is to be "partly sacred and partly instrumental;" that is to say, one part is to be just as sacred as the other; for all good music is sacred, if it is heard sacredly, and all poor music is execrably unsacred.

THE Bible Society is sending its shiploads of Bibles all over the world—to Greenland and the Morea, to Arabia and Egypt; but it dares not send them to our own people. The colporteur who should leave a Bible in a slave's cabin would go to heaven from the lowest limb of the first tree. It was hell, among the ancients, that was guarded by a hundred-headed dog; in this country, it is heaven that has the Cerberus.

ASCETICISM is not dead yet. A man may be poor in spirit without being poor in his garments. Because a man is a Christian he is not called to forswear the treasures of refinement. Consecrated using, and not despising and throwing away, is God's law for riches and beauty, and all earthly good. All secular good belongs to the Christian more than to any other man. In God's wish, he is not only the heir of God hereafter, but it is declared that he shall now inherit the *earth*. A Christian who every day carries home his gifts to Christ may be heaped with treasure, and with all things that are beautiful in the world. The world only waits till Christians can bear it without self-indulgence, before it pours all its bright possessions into their lap. It is enough that

* Notice of a concert.

Christ was born in a manger; His children are not always to tabernacle there. Christ is not to be the pauper of the universe for ever. He is to be the King of glory.

THERE are some people who for ever add a "*But then*" to every positive having, and so always make a drain or sluiceway by which the heavenly stream of God's favours escapes from them.

THE Church has been so fearful of amusements that the devil has had the care of them. The chaplet of flowers has been snatched from the brow of Christ, and given to Mammon.

MANY people think that *doctrine* should be the staple of preaching,—that on a rainy day, or when the minister is not quite well, he can preach *morality*,—but that when he is strong and vigorous, and knows what he is about, he should preach doctrine. This doctrinal preaching may be food for one-tenth of the congregation; but the nine-tenths will be driven by it, through disgust, into moralities. It creates two distinct parties,—the spiritualists, who are always looking Godward, and crying, "Thither, thither!" and the moralists, who look manward, and cry, "Hither, hither!" The one party lives in the *then*, the other party in the *now*. Both are right,—minister and people,—and both are wrong. Doctrines and moralities must be united.

Many ministers forge doctrines as they would forge ploughs. One Sunday it is election; and they heat it red hot, and beat and hammer it upon the anvil, and then put it away, cold iron, upon the shelf. The next Sunday it is decrees; and they beat and hammer that, and lay it also aside. The next Sunday it is the perseverance of the saints; and the next, the origin of evil, or some equally incomprehensible thing, for the farther a subject is from the range of human faculties the better it seems to be to make a doctrine of; and so they go on through the year, with occasional exceptions, and the next year they take them down and cast them over again. They do not use them. They only fashion them. They rub them up, they polish them, and then lay them again on the shelf—disputing meanwhile which pattern is best. There are various schools; and each school has its own pattern, and berates the others, without ever doing as inventors do at agricultural fairs—taking

their ploughs out into the field with them, to see which can do the best work.

Now, I believe in doctrines, with my explanation, as much as they; but I must *use* them. My duty is to forge a plough, and then to give it a handle, and then to fasten a team to it strong as eternity, and to put it into the soil, and to rip through the sod down to the subsoil, and to roust out all the vermin and the nibbling mice, and turn up the yellow dirt to the sun.

No doctrine is good for anything that does not leave behind it an ethical furrow ready for the planting of seeds which shall spring up and bear abundant harvests.

THERE are many of us whose children are in heaven, who have been borne from us through quick life to lie in angels' bosoms; and though they were not wrested from us without pangs, and though the places which they filled in our hearts are as wells of tears, yet we would not have them back, and we are glad to-day for our sakes and for their own. And some we are piloting, but must soon leave them alone upon the tossing sea. God grant that then, without shipwreck, they may safely reach the haven where we have gone.

WHEN a Church is faithless to its duties, the real Church is outside its walls, in the community.

IN plan, include the whole; in execution, take life day by day. Men do not know how to reconcile the oppugnant directions that we should live for the future, and yet should find our life in fidelities to the present; but the last is only the method of the first. True aiming, in life, is like true aiming in marksmanship. We always look at the fore-sight of a rifle through the hind-sight.

THERE are many Christians who like, about once in twelve months, to have a good revival in their hearts. They think that, like the year, they can make up for freezing and snowing all winter, by a period of intense heat in the summer. The remedy for such is not to chill the revivals, but to shorten the intervals between them, and to endeavour to make their life equatorial and tropical all the year round.

NO one cries when children, long absent from their

parents, go home. Vacation morning is a jubilee. But death is the Christian's vacation morning. School is out. It is time to go home. It is surprising that one should wish life here, who may have life in heaven. And when friends have gone out from us joyously, I think we should go with them to the grave, not singing mournful psalms, but scattering flowers. Christians are wont to walk in black, and sprinkle the ground with tears, at the very time when they should walk in white, and illumine the way by smiles and radiant hope. The disciples found angels at the grave of Him they loved; and we should always find them too, but that our eyes are too full of tears for seeing.

THE stars do not come to tell us that it is night, but to lay beams of light through it, and give the eye a path to walk in. It needed the mission of Christ to lift the darkness which brooded over the world, not to proclaim it; and therefore it was said, "To them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." When men grope through the New Testament, and come forth with denials of man's wickedness, from the supposed lack of peremptory assertions, my reply to them would be, "Go, search all medical books; find me an argument to prove that there are fevers, or dropsies, or plagues. Search all military works, and find me the passages which laboriously seek to prove that men have been slain. Search through all optical works, and bring me the passage which declares that there is an eye, and that there is such an act as seeing." If there were as little common sense among men in every-day life as there is in their treatment of the Bible, the whole earth must needs become a lunatic asylum, to hold all who should be sent there.

NEVER forget what a man has said to you when he was angry If he has charged you with anything, you had better look it up. Anger is a bow that will shoot sometimes where another feeling will not.

THERE is many a Christian who has higher views of God in his closet, or on the sea, or when travelling through lonely woods, than he ever has in the sanctuary—outstartings, so to speak, of God before him, which reveal Him more plainly than anything he ever found when he was seeking for Him.

Suffering is a part of the Divine idea. All our faculties stand in a double constitution, and are just as really susceptible of pain as of pleasue. We were created so that every nerve was provided with this twofold nature, and both of them are Divine. The world is filled full of dangerous things—things which can bruise, and cut, and poison—and no angel stands near them to say, "Come not here." There is not a step we can take but death is there. Pain is continually on the larboard or starboard side, and life consists in steering between dangers on the one hand or the other. Where there is so much sorrow, there is only one way. It is to think that suffering is a part of happiness. One who does this takes all trials, and heaps them up, and says, "They are no longer to me what they were before. They are not opaque; they are luminous."

A man in a state of hot-brain nervousness is burning up. He is like a candle in a hot candlestick, which burns off at one end and melts down at the other.

It is a sad thing to look at some of the receiving hulks at the navy yard—to think that that was the ship which once went so fearlessly across the ocean! It has come back to be anchored in some quiet bay, and so roll this way and that with the tide. Yet this is what many men set before them as the end of life—that they may reach some haven, where they will be able to cast out an anchor at the bow and an anchor at the stern, and never move again; but rock lazily, without a sail, without a voyage, waiting simply for decay to take apart their timbers.

I have seen men who, I thought, ought to have a whole conversion for each one of their faculties. Their natures were so unmitigatedly wicked, that it cost more for them to be decent than it would for other men to be saints.

Public sentiment is like a battery, which protects the city that is behind it, but sweeps with destruction all the plain that is before it. It powerfully restrains men from doing wrong; but when they have done wrong, it sets itself as powerfully against them. The height of Dover Cliffs would prevent a man from jumping into the sea; but once amid the thunder of the waves, and what chance would there be for him to climb the steep?

MANY people regard the Bible as an old ruin. They think there may be some chambers in it which might be made habitable, if it were worth the while; but they take it as a young heir takes his estate, who says, "I shall build me a modern house to live in, but I'll keep the old castle as a ruin;" and so they have some scientific or literary house to live in, and look upon the Bible only as a romantic relic of the past.

A MAN must not only desire to be right—he must *be* right. You may say, "I wish to send this ball so as to kill the lion crouching yonder, ready to spring upon me. My wishes are all right, and I hope Providence will direct the ball." Providence won't. You must do it; and if you do not, you are a dead man.

MEN are greatly relieved when they have at length rid themselves of belief in some unwelcome doctrine—as if facts could be destroyed as easily as opinions.

God sees that you are naked and poor, and comes to you with a royal wardrobe and all supplies. Suppose you succeed in proving that there is no food or raiment; you are still poor and naked. What would you think, if there were to be an insurrection in an hospital, and sick man should conspire with sick man, and on a certain day they should rise up and reject the doctors and nurses? There they would be—sickness and disease within, and all the help without! Yet what is an hospital compared to this fever-ridden world, which goes swinging in pain and anguish through the centuries, where men say, "We have got rid of the atonement, and we are rid of the Bible?" Yes, and you have rid yourselves of salvation.

AS, though the sky is not steadfastly clear, but often is covered with clouds, yet through the folds there shine at intervals the everlasting stars, so through the darkness of our hearts there steals at times the celestial glory, and we rejoice that there is a heaven above the world.

YOU know how the heart is subject to freshets; you know how the mother, who, always loving her child, yet, seeing in it some new wile of affection, will catch it up and cover it with kisses, and break forth in a rapture of loving. Such a kind of heart-glow fell from the Saviour upon that young

man who said to Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" It is said, "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him."

SOME men spend their lives in picking off dead leaves from the tree of their being. They think they are growing better because they now and then take out their will, like a pruning knife, to cut off this and that bough. They imagine they are self-denying because they dust themselves over with unpleasant sulphur; but, all the while, they never go to the root, where the worm of selfishness is working.

THERE are many trials in life which do not seem to come from unwisdom or folly. They are silver arrows shot from the bow of God, and fixed inextricably in the quivering heart. They are to be borne. They were not meant, like snow on water, to melt as soon as they strike. But the moment an ill can be patiently borne, it is disarmed of its poison, though not of its pain.

THE thought of the future punishment for the wicked, which the Bible reveals, is enough to make an earthquake of terror in every man's soul. I do not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment because I delight in it. I would cast in doubts, if I could, till I had filled hell up to the brim. I would destroy all faith in it; but that would do me no good; I could not destroy the thing. Nor does it help me to take the word "everlasting," and put it into a rack like an inquisitor, until I make it shriek out some other meaning; I cannot alter the stern fact.

The exposition of future punishment in God's Word is not to be regarded as a threat, but as a merciful declaration. If, in the ocean of life, over which we are bound to eternity, there are these rocks and shoals, it is no cruelty to chart them down; it is an eminent and prominent mercy.

THERE are no buds which can open without the sun, but there is a great difference in the time it takes them to unfold. Some have their outer petals so closely wrapped and glued together, that there must be many days of warm shining before they will begin to expand; and others there are which make haste to get out of the ground; and almost as soon as they are buds, they are blossoms. So is it with human hearts. Some are so cold and impervious that it seems as though

God's Spirit never could reach them; and others there are which open to its first influences.

Some people have no perspective in their conscience. Their moral convictions are the same on all subjects. They are like a reader who speaks every word with equal emphasis.

Every thought and feeling is a painting stroke, in the darkness, of our likeness that is to be; and our whole life is but a chamber, which we are frescoing with colours that do not appear while being laid on wet, but which will shine forth afterwards, when finished and dry.

If there are any here this morning who are bewildered, and are wandering up and down in the forest of their own thoughts, sitting down to rest, and then rising again to renew their fruitless search for the path that leads out to light and joy, may the Shepherd of the lost go after them, and bring them back, if need be, in His own bosom. And if there are any who are in the garden, and, knowing not the Lord, are calling, "Tell me where they have laid him?" may He speak to them by their names, that they may cry, "My Lord and my God!"

There is no day born but comes like a stroke of music into the world, and sings itself all the way through. There is no event that is discordant. All times and passages are full of melody, if we would but hear it. And as, in tumultuous floods and rushing falls of water, every drop is as obedient to the laws of nature as if it lay in the bosom of the tranquil lake, so all things in earth and in hell, in their wildest excesses as well as in their calmest flows, are obedient to God; and His providence is in them stately and serene, going on to its own ends and manifestations.

It is winter now. The earth is frost-bound, and incrusted with ice and snow; but soon the sun will come wheeling from the tropics, and the voice of Spring will call, and the violets and daisies shall hear it, as well as the pines in Oregon, and everywhere there shall be life, and growth, and beauty. So it is with man. His winter has been long and dark; but the sun of God's love shall shine, and the crusts of tyranny and the frosts of oppression shall melt away beneath its rays, and the humblest as well as the loftiest

creature shall yet stand in the light and liberty of the sons of God.

LIKE gardens with high stone walls, very rich and pleasant to those who get in, but very unlovely and forbidding to those who are without, so are men of taste and cultivation, who spend their whole lives to themselves with knowledges and refinements most needful to common men, and employ all their pride to build themselves around inaccessible.

AS, when our infant children are garnered in our bosoms, we do not bless them according to their capacity of asking, but according to the wealth of affection that is in our hearts for them, so does God, lifting us up and looking in our faces, bless us, not so much by what we need to receive, as by what He hath to give. Clouds never send down to ask the grass and plants below how much they need; they rain for the relief of their own full bosoms.

HEAVEN will be inherited by every man who has heaven in his soul. "The kingdom of God is within you."

THERE are hundreds of Churches which are nothing but mutual insurance companies, seeking to take care of themselves and of each other, and to see that religion is protected. Religion protected! It was given us for *our* protection, and we are not to carry it unused and shielded from blows, but to put it on like armour, and to go down with it into the battle. When Paul said, "Quit ye like men," he was not thinking of those Christians who are rocked in the cradle of a conservative Church, by the slippered foot of a soft-speaking minister, to all delicate ditties; but of a stalwart soldier, with his face as bronzed as his helmet, and ready for the fray.

It is not a man's part merely to keep his armour bright; to hang around the edge of the fight, and, whenever he sees it bulging out towards him, to retreat to a hill, and, if any dust has fallen upon his armour, to set to work at once to brush it off. It a man's business to go down to the battle, and to use his sword when he gets there. Man was not meant to be an armour-keeper; but there are men who go all their lives scrubbing up their armour—keeping their hope bright and their faith bright, but never using them. Miserable, scouring Christians!

What if the leaves were to fall a-weeping, and say, "It will be so painful for us to be pulled from our stalks, when autumn comes?" Foolish fear! Summer goes, and autumn succeeds. The glory of death is upon the leaves; and the gentlest breeze that blows takes them softly and silently from the bough, and they float slowly down, like fiery sparks, upon the moss.

It is hard to die when the time is not ripe. When it is, it will be easy. We need not die while we are living.

Our business, as ministers, is not to make men a something else than men, called Christians; it is to take Christianity as a formative influence, by which to make men. They are re-created, it is true; but it is not out of manhood, but into manhood. Grace is meant to carry men back to nature, whose true laws and intents are only the moulds of God's thoughts. The idea of the Bible is not to make neat, snug, nice, dapper little Christians, that go tripping along the ways of life. There is no warrant in the Bible for anything which is not manly, and robust, and large. Cautiousness and timidity, a narrow path and a timid policy, are not Christian traits.

* As bells answer bells, and strike with sweet collision in the air, so may heart answer heart, and joy answer joy, upon this wedding-day when those who are affianced to God are openly united to Him in holy communion.

I have seen men whose reverence for religion was so morbid that they could hardly lift up their eyes to heaven, but who made it up by the way they looked *down* on their fellow-men—men who yielded to no master here, who were touched by no name of friend or brother; but the moment the name of God was pronounced, they collapsed.

Why should you carry troubles and sorrows unhealed? There is no bodily wound for which some herb doth not grow, and heavenly plants are more medicinal. Bind up your hearts in them, and they shall give you not only healing, but leave with you the perfume of the blessed gardens where they grew. Thus it may be that sorrows shall turn to riches; for heart troubles, in God's husbandry, are not wounds, but the putting in of the spade before the planting of seeds.

* At communion.

Men come to think that the guilt of sins committed in concert is distributed; and that if there be a thousand men banded and handed together in wickedness, each shall have but the one-thousandth part of guilt. If a firm succeeds, the gain is distributed to each partner. But if it fails, each one may be held for the whole loss. Whoever commits a sin will bear the sin, whether alone or with a thousand. Whoever commits, or connives at a public sin, will bear the blame, as if he alone did it. Public guilt always has private indorsement, and each man is liable for the whole note.

No matter how good the walls and the materials are, if the foundations are not strong, the building will not stand. By and by, in some upper room, a crack will appear, and men will say, "There is the crack, but the cause is in the foundation." So, if in youth you lay the foundations of your character wrongly, the penalty will be sure to follow. The crack may be far down in old age, but somewhere it will certainly appear.

That which is called "public sentiment" is often nothing but a rod held over the head of approbativeness.

It is right to have an expansive benevolence—to take into our regard the world and the race—but where foreign charity is but a defence against home kindness, it is a base, sentimental sham. Thousands will cry over compressed feet in China who are quite unaffected by souls compressed in America. That religion should compel mothers in India to cast their babes to the Ganges, shocks every sensibility of some men's soul, who can see no occasion for grief that commerce snatches from the dusky mother in America her babes, and casts them forth to slavery—a worse monster than was ever bred in the slime of the Ganges or the mud of the Nile.

A Christian nation, jealous of its laws but careless of its people—conservative of its institutions, but contemptuous of the weak and poor whom those institutions oppress—are baptized infidels. Christ never died for laws nor for governments, but for *men;* and they who crush men to build up nations may expect God to meet them with the blast of His lightning and the terror of His thunder. The masses against the classes the world over—I am willing to go to judgment upon that.

In the Bible, the word *doctrine* means simply *teaching,*

instruction. It was a moral direction, a simple maxim, or a familiar practical truth. It certainly was not that thing which theologians have made doctrine to be—a mere philosophical abstraction. The doctrines which the schools teach are no more like those of the Bible than the carved beams of Solomon's temple were like God's cedar trees on Mount Lebanon. But men cut and hew till they have shaped their own fancies out of God's timber, and then they get upon them like judgment-day thrones, and call all the world to answer at their feet for heresies against their idols. There are few heresies in the world more real than the very idea of an abstract doctrine presented as God's truth. That way of thinking which men call metaphysics, seems not to be employed above. It is only a method of weakness down below. It is a preparation dissected and arranged for our microscope, who have not eyes strong enough to see things just as God made them, and just as He keeps them.

If a fireplace have a good chimney, the smoke will escape through the flue, and the room will have the benefit of the warmth and the ruddy light. So there are people who will be kind and good-natured to all about them, if you give them some single person on whom they may vent their impatience and peevishness. Otherwise they will fill the whole room with smoke. Social circles need chimneys as much as do houses.

There is nothing in this world so fiendish as the conduct of a mean man when he has the power to revenge himself upon a noble one in adversity. It takes a *man* to make a devil; and the fittest man for such a purpose is a snarling, waspish, red-hot, fiery creditor.

A law is valuable, not because it is law, but because there is right in it; and because of this rightness it is like a vessel carrying perfume—like the alabaster enclosure of a lamp. A principle is better than a rule; yet we are not to despise rules, for they are leading-strings intended to bring us along the path of life to principles. A rule is like a mould. You pour in the wax; and when it is pressed, it comes out, and the mould is left behind. The end of a rule is to bring the man out from the rule. Rules are like sepals around a rose-bud—good to keep the bud through its first stages; but when it opens, and comes to the perfect flower, then they fall off, and are useless. The highest type of character is

that which is made up of feelings so luminous that the man takes a more elevated path than he could ever do if he were bound down to rules and precedents.

A MAN'S strength, in this life, is often greater from some single word, remembered and cherished, than in arms or armour. Looking over the dead on a field of battle, it was easy to see why that young man, and he a recruit, fought so valiantly. Hidden under his vest was a sweet face, done up in gold; and so, through love's heroism, he fought with double strokes, and danger mounting higher, till he found honour in death. So, if you carry the talisman of Christ in your heart, it will give you strength and courage in every conflict, and, at death, open to you the gates of glory.

LOVING is like music. Some instruments can go up two octaves, some four, and some all the way from black thunder to sharp lightning. As some of them are susceptible only of melody, so some hearts can sing but one song of love, while others will run in a full choral harmony.

* IN commercial crises, manhood is at a greater discount than funds are. Suppose a man had said to me, last spring—"If there comes a pinch in your affairs, draw on me for ten thousand dollars,"—the man said so last spring, but I should not dare to draw on him this fall. I should say—"Times have changed; he would not abide by it." But God's promises are "from everlasting to everlasting," and He always stands up to them. There never was a run on heaven which was not promptly met. No creature in all the world, or in lying, audacious hell, shall ever say that he drew a draft upon heaven, and that God dishonoured it.

How wonderful that Christ should love us! We know how to love our children, because they are better than we; we know how to love our friends, because they are no worse than we; but how Christ can stoop from out the circle of blessed spirits to love us, who are begrimed with sin, and bestormed with temptation, and wrestling with the lowest parts of humanity,—that is past our finding out. He has loved us from the foundation of the world; and because heaven was too far away for us to see, He came down to earth to do the things which He has always been doing pro-

* From a sermon on the financial crisis, October, 1857.

fusely above. Christ's life on earth was not an official mission; it was a development of His everlasting state; a dip to bring within our horizon those characteristics and attributes which otherwise we could not comprehend;—God's pilgrimage on earth as a shepherd, in search of His wolf-imperilled fold. And when I look into His life, I say to myself—"As tender as this, and yet on earth! What is He now, then? If He was such when imprisoned in the flesh, what is He now in the full liberty and largeness of His heavenly state?"

How hateful is that religion which says—"Business is business, and politics are politics, and religion is religion!" Religion is using everything for God; but many men dedicate business to the devil, and politics to the devil, and shove religion into the cracks and crevices of time, and make it the hypocritical outcrawling of their leisure and laziness.

As sometimes, when we go to our work in summer, we are annoyed by swarms of insects that fill the air with murmurous buzz, and trouble the eye and the ear, and offend every sense, so there are some passages in the Bible so infested by commentators, by controversialists, and theologians, and curious Christians, that one cannot approach them except through a swarm of buzzing associations which distract the season, and pervert the judgment, and take away all the heart enjoyment which they were meant to give. The only way to get at the truth, is to strip them of all foregone knowledges. Among these passages is the eighth chapter of Romans, which one would think was a grindstone on which all men sharpened their wits, and brought their theories to an edge and a point. Do not read this chapter with commentaries; if you do, they will raise such a dust that you cannot see a foot before you. It is going over Jordan into the promised land to read this chapter as it was intended to be read. I could walk over it dry-shod, as the Israelites did over the Red Sea. It is only those who are wise in their head, and poverty stricken in their heart, upon whom the waves of difficulty return on either side. It was meant to open up the regality of God's nature, and to show His bounteous love and tenderness towards those "who are the called according to His purpose,"—that is, who *love* Him.

The boy holds his ball of twine in his hand, and thinks it is not much, he can clasp it so easily; but when he begins to

unroll it, and his wind-borne kite mounts higher and higher, till at length, that which on the ground was taller than he, is now no bigger than his hand, he is astonished to see how long it is. So there are little texts which look small in your palm, but when caught up upon some experience, they unfold themselves, and stretch out until there is no measuring their length.

I HAVE always been much affected by Christ's reply to the Syro-Phœnician woman, when she begged Him to cast the devil out of her daughter. If I saw the poorest child in the street falling down in convulsions, and agonized and distorted with pain, and it were in my power to restore her, how gladly would I go to her, and raise her up, and bring her back to health and joy! Now, how little is my willingness, compared to Christ's! for what in me is one little pulsation, in Him is the tide of the universe. His heart went out towards the poor suppliant with infinite yearning and tenderness. He longed, and meant to grant her request, and yet He stops to parley with her: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." I hardly know how to express this delaying of mercy in God—this sublime playfulness, is it?—this coyness, is not that the word? or is it a certain holding back, as one draws the bow back when he means to send the shaft yet farther?

The apostle speaks of things which are not, as bringing to nought things that are; and so many of Christ's silences impress me full as much as His sayings; His rests and not-doings seem even more significant, at times, than that which was overt. That which He said was what could be expressed and received by the mind; but when, pausing, He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," my imagination is inflamed as with the idea of an upper sphere too vast for words or interpretation.

MANY Christians are like chestnuts—very pleasant nuts, but enclosed in very prickly burs, which need various dealings of nature, and her grip of frost, before the kernel is disclosed.

IN moist and liberal summers, the wheat is often covered with fungi and parasitic plants; and it has to be put through smutting machines, that it may be cleansed, and made ready for grinding into flour. So men in prosperity often have

fungi and parasitic plants growing on almost every faculty; and then to purify them, God puts them through trials which are like smutting machines to the wheat. The best thing which can happen to such men is a trouble that will bolt them.

As a general rule, self-contemplation is a power towards mischief. The only way to grow is to look out of one's self. There is too much introversion among Christians. A ship-master might as well look down into the hold of his ship for the north star, as a Christian look down into his own heart for the Sun of Righteousness. Out and beyond is the shining.

As I grow older, and come nearer to death, I look upon it more and more with complacent joy, and out of every longing I hear God say, "O thirsting, hungering one, come to Me." What the other life will bring I know not, only that I shall awake in God's likeness, and see Him as He is. If a child had been born and spent all his life in the Mammoth Cave, how impossible would it be for him to comprehend the upper world! His parents might tell him of its life, and light, and beauty, and its sounds of joy; they might heap up the sand into mounds, and try to show him, by pointing to stalactites, how grass, and flowers, and trees grow out of the ground, till at length, with laborious thinking, the child would fancy he had gained a true idea of the unknown land. And yet, though he longed to behold it, when the day came that he was to go forth, it would be with regret for the familiar crystals, and the rock-hewn rooms, and the quiet that reigned therein. But when he came up, some May morning, with ten thousand birds singing in the trees, and the heavens bright, and blue, and full of sunlight, and the wind blowing softly through the young leaves, all a-glitter with dew, and the landscape stretching away green and beautiful to the horizon, with what rapture would he gaze about him, and see how poor were all the fancyings and the interpretations which were made within the cave, of the things which grew and lived without; and how would he wonder that he could have regretted to leave the silence and the dreary darkness of his old abode! So, when we emerge from this cave of earth into that land where spring growths are, and where is summer, and not that miserable travestie which we call summer here, how shall we won-

der that we could have clung so fondly to this dark and barren life!

Beat on, then, O heart, and yearn for dying. I have drunk at many a fountain, but thirst came again; I have fed at many a bounteous table, but hunger returned; I have seen many bright and lovely things, but, while I gazed, their lustre faded. There is nothing here that can give me rest; but when I behold thee, O God, I shall be satisfied!

It is a joy to me to know that the Christians within the communion of this Church are not all the Christians to be found in the congregation. We are richer than we appear to be. Here are growing pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees, and shrubs, and blossoming vines, and flowers of every hue and odour; but I am glad that some seeds have been blown over the wall, and that fruit trees and flowers most pleasant to the eye are springing up there also. And though I wish they were within the enclosure, where the boar out of the wood could not waste them, and the wild beast of the field devour them, yet I love them, and am glad to see them growing there. To all such I say, God nourish and protect you, and bring you, with us, to the garden above.

A man may look over an artist at his work, and see that he makes bad strokes, but yet shall see that he is *to be* a good artist. The sense of his purpose is not marred by his imperfect execution. So a Christian may have an irritable temper, or be a proud man, and yet may live so that the impression is produced that he is trying to regulate his interior nature by the law of Christ. He is a Christian who is manfully struggling to live a Christian's life.

Reason can tell how love affects us, but cannot tell what love is.

Did you ever sit in a half-cleared forest in a summer's day, and, looking up, see the light come fleckering down in uncounted shades of golden-brown and greenish-gold, and these all the while changing and running into each other with the rustling leaves and the cloud-crossed sun? How useless to attempt to chronicle this play and interplay of light and dark! yet this would be simple and easy,

compared with the effort to note the number and variety of our thoughts and feelings for a single hour. If the flow of a day's mind and heart experiences were written, it would be a volume, and one's life a Bodleian library; but the "book of remembrance" is yonder, and the life is daguerreotyped on the sensitive pages of the future.

As ships meet at sea, a moment together, when words of greeting must be spoken, and then, away upon the deep, so men meet in this world; and I think we should cross no man's path without hailing him, and, if he needs, giving him supplies.

THREE natural philosophers go out into the forest and find a nightingale's nest, and forthwith they begin to discuss the habits of the bird, its size, its colour, and the number of eggs it lays; and one pulls out of his pocket a treatise of Buffon, and another of Cuvier, and another of Audubon, and they read and dispute till at length the quarrel runs so high over the empty nest, that they tear each other's leaves, and get red in the face, and the woods ring with their conflict; when, lo! out of the green shade of a neighbouring thicket, the bird itself, rested, and disturbed by these side noises, begins to sing. At first its song is soft and low, and then it rises and swells, and waves of melody float up over the trees, and fill the air with tremulous music, and all the forest doth hush; and the entranced philosophers, subdued and ashamed of their quarrel, shut their books and walk home without a word.

So men who around the empty sepulchre of Christ have wrangled about the forms of religion, about creeds, and doctrines, and ordinances, when Christ himself, disturbed by their discords, sings to them, out of heaven, of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are ashamed of their conflicts, and go quietly and meekly to their duties.

THERE are some men who are so outrageously cultivated, that they are miserable the moment they are away from all which is exquisite. It is a pity that such men were born into a rough world like this, where God forgot to finish up rocks, and to make tree-trunks smooth, and to slope the mountains down gently to the plains. That is true cultivation which gives us sympathy with every form of human life, and enables us to work most successfully for its advance-

ment. Refinement that carries us away from our fellow-men is not God's refinement.

If a boy is not trained to endure and to bear trouble, he will grow up a girl; and a boy that is a girl has all a girl's weakness without any of her regal qualities. A woman made out of a woman is God's noblest work; a woman made out of a man is His meanest. A child rightly brought up will be like a willow branch, which, broken off and touching the ground, at once takes root. Bring up your children so that they will root easily in their own soil, and not for ever be grafted into your old trunk and boughs.

As, in freshets on western rivers, sticks of timber and broken branches are borne down the flood and lodged in the boughs of trees, where they remain for years, lifted far up above the ground, dry and helpless, so, in revival freshets, men are sometimes caught in the boughs of this or that Church, and stay merely because they are lodged there; and men passing by afterwards, and seeing dry logs strangely perched in so uncouth a way, wonder what force of water ever bore such worthless stuff so high.

A Christian merchant should so act that his customers shall see and know that he is a Christian; not merely that he conducts his business on great maxims of honesty, but that business itself is subordinate and instrumental to the great purposes of life. Is it so with you? How far does the difference between you and the worldly man lie in the fact, that on the seventh day you have a little tabernacle of religious experience into which you run? Go through the streets and stores of New York; you can pick out the men that are wealthy; can you pick out the men that are Christians? What wonder that truth makes such slow advances in the world, with one Christian to tell what is true for two hours on Sunday, and hundreds to deny it all the week by their lives!

Many men are lamenting their misfortunes, and wishing that their place was changed that they might the more easily live Christianly. If a man cannot be a Christian in the place where he is, he cannot be a Christian anywhere.

If I could not send a man among the mountains, or

through the valleys, or by the side of streams, I would shut him up in the resounding recesses of the Old Testament. There is more loving description of nature in the Psalms alone, than in all Greek and Roman literature. Yet the Bible has been used so unfairly, and a truckling priesthood have drawn from it such base arguments, that men of free and generous natures have been repelled by it, and have gone away with the wings of literature and the feet of science to find God in the great realm of nature. In those sciences which might be called the light infantry of progress, the Zouaves of thought, that are skirmishing in the valleys, and hanging along the hills, and sending vanguards against the enemy, there is much infidelity.

I, too, will go out and read God in the strata; I, too, through the stars will hear the chiming of the spheres; I will be behind none in enjoying the sweet perfume of flowers; but when I do all this, I will remember that the Bible is the beacon fire at which I have lighted the torch that has guided me to this knowledge and these delights.

A CONSERVATIVE young man has wound up his life before it was unreeled. We expect old men to be conservative, but when a nation's young men are so, its funeral bell is already rung.

WHERE is there a reason strong enough to fly up and pluck the secret out of the bosom of God, which it has not pleased His tongue to make known? I accept the fact, the simple fact, the august, solemn fact, that it was necessary for Christ to suffer; the theological explanations I do not believe a word in.

Those who say that Christ's sufferings were not vicarious, will have to fight, not only with the Bible, but with all the weight of human life. Suffering, in human life, is very widely vicarious. Every man feels this in himself, one part of his being paying another's penalty. If he loves overmuch, it is not love that suffers, but conscientiousness. If his passions are unduly excited, it is his moral nature that feels the transgression. If the brain be overwrought, the body feels it. The first lesson of life is one of vicarious suffering. As we go to the ship to see friends depart, and leave them with cheers and benedictions, and wafted kisses, so when a young spirit is about to be launched into this earthly life, one would think that troops of angels would attend it, and

with hope and gladness see it on its way. But no. Silently it passes the bounds of the unseen land, and the gate which opens to admit it to this, is a gate of tears and moans. Through the sorrow of another is it ushered into existence. Love cannot clasp all it yearns for in its bosom, without first suffering for it. The child lives upon its parents' life. The child which has no one to suffer for it is a miserable wretch. And, from this point onward, in every relation of life, one man suffers for another's benefit. It is the law of social life, and I do not see why we should think it strange that Christ obeyed the same law, only in a grander way.

Consecration is not wrapping one's self in a holy web in the sanctuary, and then coming forth after prayer and twilight meditation, and saying, "There, I am consecrated." Consecration is going out into the world where God Almighty is, and using every power for His glory. It is taking all advantages as trust funds—as confidential debts owed to God. It is simply dedicating one's life, in its whole flow, to God's service.

There is nothing which the world resents so much as an attempt to carry out a better measure than existed before. A man who would benefit the world must take leave of his own reputation first; for the world never let a man bless it but it first fought him; it never let him give it a boon without first giving him a buffet. If with one effort you should raise a tree twenty feet high, so as to make it forty feet high, you would not do more violence to its roots than you do to society, when you attempt suddenly to elevate it above its former level. If there were a hundred violins together, all playing below concert pitch, and I should take a real Cremona, and with the hand of a Paganini should bring it strongly up to the true key, and then should sweep my bow across it like a storm, and make it sound forth clear and resonant, what a demoniac jargon would the rest of the playing seem! Yet the other musicians would be enraged at me. They would think all the discord was mine, and I should be to them a demoniac. So it is with reformers. The world thinks the discord is with them, and not in its own false playing. All those rosy philosophers who go dancing along the ways of life, and expect to reform men through ease and pleasure, and are surprised when at first snow flakes are thrown at them, and then icicles, and then avalanches, had better fold

their gauzy wings at once. They are not wanted. They are not of that heroic race who advance the world.

Heart knowledge, through God's teaching, is true wealth, and they are often poorest who deem themselves most rich. I, in the pulpit, preach with loud words to many an humble widow and stricken man who might well teach me. The student, spectacled and gray with wisdom, and stuffed with lumbered lore, may be childish and ignorant beside some old singing saint who carries the wood into his study, and who, with the lens of his own experience, brings down the orbs of truth, and beholds, through his faith and his humility, things of which the white-haired scholar never dreamed.

Christ took the part of religion against religious institutions; of religious feeling against religious usages which are often venerable, in proportion as they are nothing else. God's law of love, which the Jews had made stone, was smitten by Christ, and made to gush with water for the poor that lay athirst and gasping in the dust.

No matter how infidel philosophers may regard the Bible; they may say that Genesis is awry, and that the Psalms are more than half bitter imprecations, and the Prophecies only the fantasies of brain-bewildered men, and the Gospels weak laudations of an impostor, and the Epistles but the letters of a mad Jew, and that the whole book has had its day; I shall cling to it until they show me a better revelation. The Bible emptied, effete, worn out! If all the wisest men of the world were placed man to man, they could not sound the shallowest depth of the Gospel of John. O philosophers! break the shell, and fly out, and let me hear how you can sing. Not of passion—I know that already; not of worldly power—I hear that everywhere; but teach me, through your song, how to find joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, and light in darkest days; how to bear buffeting and scorn, how to welcome death, and to pass through its ministration into the sphere of life; and this, not for me only, but for the whole world that groans and travails in pain; and until you can do this, speak not to me of a better revelation.

The great ocean is in a constant state of evaporation. It gives back what it receives, and sends up its waters in mists to gather into clouds; and so there is rain on the fields, and

storm on the mountains, and greenness and beauty everywhere. But there are many men who do not believe in evaporation. They get all they can, and keep all they get, and so are not fertilizers, but only stagnant, miasmatic pools.

An acorn is not an oak tree when it is sprouted. It must go through long summers and fierce winters; it has to endure all that frost, and snow, and thunder, and storm, and side-striking winds can bring, before it is a full-grown oak. These are rough teachers; but rugged schoolmasters make rugged pupils. So a man is not a man when he is created —he is only begun. His manhood must come with years. A man who goes through life prosperous, and comes to his grave without a wrinkle, is not half a man. In time of war, whom does the general select for some hazardous enterprise? He looks over the men, and chooses the soldier whom he knows will not flinch at danger, but will go bravely through whatever is allotted to him. He calls him that he may receive his orders, and the officer, blushing with pleasure to be thus chosen, hastens away to execute them. Difficulties are God's errands. And when we are sent upon them we should esteem it a proof of God's confidence—as a compliment from God. The traveller who goes round the world prepares himself to pass through all latitudes, and to meet all changes. So a man must he willing to take life as it comes; to mount the hill when the hill swells, and to go down the hill when the hill lowers; to walk the plain when it stretches before him, and to ford the river when it rolls over the plain. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

There is no harder shield for the devil to pierce with temptation than singing with prayer.

If the architect of a house had one plan, and the contractor had another, what conflicts would there be! How many walls would have to come down, how many doors and windows would need to be altered, before the two could harmonize! Of the building of life, God is the Architect, and man is the contractor. God has one plan, and man has another. Is it strange that there are clashings and collisions?

Thinking is creating, with God, as thinking is writing,

with the ready writer; and worlds are only leaves turned over in the process of composition, about His throne.

Our sweetest experiences of affection are meant to be suggestions of that realm which is the home of the heart.

Religion, in one sense, is a life of self-denial, just as husbandry, in one sense, is a work of death. You go and bury a seed, and that is husbandry; but you bury one that you may reap a hundredfold. Self-denial does not belong to religion as characteristic of it; it belongs to human life. The lower nature must always be denied when you are trying to rise to a higher sphere. It is no more necessary to be self-denying to be a Christian than it is to be an artist, or to be an honest man, or to be a man at all, in distinction from a brute. Of all joyful, smiling, ever-laughing experiences, there are none like those which spring from true religion. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then was our mouth filled with laughter."

The apostle says, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." What a vision he must have had! How grandly in that moment did the Divine thought rise before his enrapt mind when he linked words together—joining golden word to golden word, as if he fain would encompass it with a chain, seeking by combinations to express what no one word could embody! "Above all that we can ask or think!" How much can a man ask or think? When the deepest convictions of sin are upon him, in his hour of dark despondency, in some perilous pass of life, when fears come upon his soul as storms on the lake Galilee, consider how much a man then *asks!* Or when love swells in his soul, and makes life as full as mountains make the streams in spring, and hope is the sun by day and the moon by night—in those gloriously elate hours when he seems no longer fixed to space and time, but, mounting as if the body were forgotten by the soul, wings his way through the realm of aspiration and conception, consider how much a man then *thinks!* All books are dry and tame compared with the great unwritten book uttered in the closet. The prayers of exiles, of martyrs, of missionaries, of the Waldenses, of the Covenanters, of mothers for children gone astray, when with plash of tears, and yearnings that can find no speech, they implore God's

mercy upon them—if some angel, catching them as they were uttered, should drop them down from heaven, what a liturgy would they make! What epic can equal those *unwritten* words which pour into the ear of God out of the heart's fullness! still more, those *unspoken* words which never find the lip, but go up to heaven in unutterable longings and aspirations! Words are but the bannerets of a great army, a few bits of waving colour here and there; thoughts are the main body of the footmen that march unseen below. Words cannot follow thoughts and feelings even in their tamer flights, still less when they take wings and soar towards God. Every day, from my window, I see the gulls making circuits and beating against the north wind. Now they mount high above the masts of vessels in the stream, and then suddenly drop to the water's edge, seeking to find some eddy unobstructed by the steady blowing blast; till at length abandoning their efforts, they turn and fly with the wind; and then how like a gleam of light do their white wings flash down the bay faster than eye can follow! So, when we cease to resist God's divine influences, and, turning towards Him, our thoughts and feelings are upborne by the breath of His Spirit, how do they make such swift heavenward flight as no words can overtake!

Yet, wonderful as are the desires and thoughts of the soul, the apostle's measurement is more than these; for he says, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we *ask or think!*" Truly His riches are unsearchable.

If we dwelt more upon God's fullness, and His desire to make us partakers of it, our Christian character would be richer. God never reveals Himself to us as a distant, glimmering light. Of all stars He calls Himself "the bright and morning star"—the star that lingers longest in the sky, and swims and glorifies an *avant courier* of the sun, as John the Baptist did in the rising splendour of Christ. Many people get a wrong idea of God by thinking of Him as infinite only in justice and power; but infinite applies to the feelings of God, as much as to the stretch of His right hand. There is nothing in His nature which is not measureless. Many think God sits brooding in heaven, as storms brood in summer skies, full of bolts and rain, and believe that they must come to Him under the covert of some apology, or beneath some umbrellaed excuse, lest the clouds should break, and the tempest overwhelm them. But when men repent to-

wards God, they go not to storms, but to serene and tranquil skies, and to a Father who waits to receive them with all tenderness, and delicacy, and love. His eye is not dark with vengeance, nor his heart turbulent with wrath; and to repent towards His justice and vindictiveness must always be from a lower motive than to repent towards His generosity and love.

This view of God's plenitude, habitually taken, will deliver us from unworthy fears, and enable us with confidence to approach His throne. It will give us hope of rectitude in life, and of glorification in heaven; not because of our feeble longing, but because of God's infinite desire for us. When stars, first created, start forth upon their vast circuits, not knowing their way, if they were conscious and sentient, they might feel hopeless of maintaining their revolutions and orbits, and despair in the face of coming ages. But, without hands or arms, the sun holds them. Without cords or bands the solar king drives them unharnessed on their mighty rounds without a single misstep, and will bring them, in the end, to their bound without a wanderer. Now, if the sun can do this—the sun, which is but a thing, itself driven and held—shall not He who created the heavens, and gave the sun his power, be able to hold *us* by the attraction of His heart, the strength of His hands, and the omnipotence of His affectionate will?

But some will say, "Such views will lead to Universalism." Does Matthew teach this? Does Mark, or Luke, or John teach it? Do they say, "To be sure God is a God of love, but take care that you do not presume upon it?" No. The first, and second, and third view of God is love. Justice is alternative. He has conscience and integrity, and He must preserve the rectitude of His kingdom; but love is His abiding place. When men were almost animals, fear was employed to bring them to God; but when they were driven a certain way towards right, then God sent higher influences to act upon them. He gave His Son to die for the world; and a thousand men will be drawn by Calvary, where one will approach through the terrors of Sinai. The New Testament opens with, "Peace on earth, good-will to men;" and these were the last words that rung through the air before the vision faded: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely;" and all between these two

magnificent notes rolls the anthem of God's mercy. "*Whosoever will!*" That is the beginning and the ending. Let every Christian heart respond in those final and sublimest words of revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

FLOWERS are the sweetest things that God ever made, and forgot to put a soul into.

FAR in the woods of Maine, in these winter months, there are a hundred camps, and scores of axemen are busy cutting down the huge trees, and measuring the logs, and sorting them, and throwing them into deep gullies, where they will lie dry and undisturbed until the snows melt, and the spring floods come, and then they will be borne out of the ravines into the ever deep-flowing river, and from thence to some Penobscot or Kennebec, and there collected together, and bound in mighty rafts, they will float down to tide waters. So men are lying, dry logs along empty channels, hoping that some revival freshet will come and sweep them down to deep waters of piety.

IT is not desirable that we should live as in the constant atmosphere and presence of death—that would unfit us for life; but it is well for us, now and then, to talk with death as friend talketh with friend, and to bathe in the strange seas, and to anticipate the experiences of that land to which it will lead us. These forethinkings are meant, not to make us discontented with life, but to bring us back with more strength, and a nobler purpose in living. A banner long unused, and laid away in a dark chamber, grows dusty and moth-eaten, and needs, for its preservation, to be unrolled and shaken out, and borne high in air. So our spiritual life decays in the confinement and darkness of the world; and that it may gain new vigour, our thoughts must now and then be unfurled, and held high, and shaken in the air of heaven.

A MAN who emigrates from the low country of selfishness, where are perpetual chills and fevers, to the high lands of benevolence, goes from sickness and barrenness to the realm of health, and plenty, and joy, where his hand can almost pluck the fruits from the tree of life itself.

SUFFERING, in repentance, is not in itself meritorious; it is

only instrumental. Many persons aim at suffering as a mode of producing a change of heart; but this is the monkish idea of bodily torture for penance. Old warriors, whose lives had been spent in crime and self-indulgence, saw some vision, some stag in the woods with a cross between his horns, and forthwith they were frightened, and resolved to amend their ways, and clothed themselves in haircloth, and were miserable the rest of their days to atone for the sins of their youth. Now, our asceticism has gone beyond this. It does not relate to the body, but to the mind. One who in youth has strayed from virtue, never forgets his error, but checks every smile with, "you remember," and lets gall from the old bitterness exude on every flower of pleasure. This is not God's example. He says, if we turn from sin He will make no mention of our transgressions, and our iniquities He will remember no more. So, when we have heartily repented of wrong, we should let all the waves of forgetfulness roll over it, and go forward unburdened to meet the future. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

A LOW and normal action of fear leads to forecast; its morbid action is a positive hindrance to effort. Water is necessary for the floating of timber; but if a log be saturated with water, it sinks in the very element which should buoy it up. Many men are water-logged with anxiety, and instead of quickening them, it only paralyzes exertion.

MORALITY is character and conduct, such as is required by the circle or community in which the man's life happens to be placed. It shows how much good *men* require of us. Religion is the endeavour of a man with all his mind, and heart, and soul, to form his life and his character upon the true elements of love and submission to God, and love and good-will to man. A spiritual Christian is like a man who learns the principles of music, and then goes on to the practice. A moralist is like a man who learns nothing of the principles, but only a few airs by rote, and is satisfied to know as many tunes as common people do. Morality is good, and is accepted of God as far as it goes; but the difficulty is, it does not go far enough. "Is not my fifty fathom cable as good as your hundred fathom one?" says the sailor. Yes, as

far as it goes; but in water a hundred fathoms deep, if it does not go within fifty fathoms of anchorage, of what use will it be in a storm?

The Christian and the moralist are alike in many things, but by and by the Christian will be admitted to a sphere which the moralist cannot enter. A barren and a fruitful vine are growing side by side in the garden, and the barren vine says to the fruitful one,—

"Is not my root as good as yours?"

"Yes," replies the vine, "as good as mine."

"And are not my lower leaves as broad and spreading, and is not my stem as large, and my bark as shaggy?"

"Yes," says the vine.

"And are not my leaves as green, and have I not as many bugs creeping up and down, and am I not taller than you?"

"Yes," meekly replies the vine; "but I have blossoms."

"Oh! blossoms are of no use."

"But I bear fruit."

"What, those clusters? Those are only a trouble to a vine."

But what thinks the vintner? He passes by the barren vine; but the other, filling the air with its odour in spring, and drooping with purple clusters in autumn, is his pride and joy; and he lingers near it, and prunes it that it may become yet more luxuriant and fruitful. So the moralist and the Christian may grow together for a while; but by and by, when the moralist's life is barren, the Christian's will come to flower and fruitage in the garden of God. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

THERE are few complete loves on earth. Though thousands love, and earnestly, yet no one knows the whole want of his life till he has met with that which is a supply to all—mind to mind, heart to heart, faculty to faculty. But the supply is so scanty, and man is so poor! It is only God who can satisfy the soul.

WE bury men when they are dead, but we try to embalm the dead body of laws, keeping the corpse in sight long after the vitality has gone. It usually takes a hundred years to make a law; and then, after it has done its work, it usually takes a hundred years to get rid of it. When we have gained our health, we do not repeat the portion of medicine, but we keep on dozing with law when the evil which it was meant to cure has passed away.

Nothing which comes into the world in the way of Divine truth is ever lost. You may open your cage and let your singing bird fly out, and he may wander away, and the song he sang you may never hear in your home again; but when God opens the door of heaven, and lets some singing truth, angel-winged, fly down to earth, it is never lost, but one catches the strain here, and another repeats it there, till at length it becomes choral.

The truth may change its form; it may be hid for years and generations; but, as the old wheat seeds, wrapped in the mummies of Egypt, now, after ages, sought out by prying travellers and planted, are found not to have lost their germ, but to have kept it through the sleep of three thousand years; so God's truths, hid in dead forms and institutions, slumbering in the grave of old books and libraries, or banished from polite society to live in the rags of the vulgar, do at length come forth with unimpaired germ, losing no more by their burial than did Christ, their Master. Like Him they carry an unquenched heart through the grave. They bring forth light from its darkness, and in spite of brute force and watchful authority, they stand again upon the earth, and look abroad with eyes of immortality.

Heathenism was always exalting the top of society, the great men, and taking no thought for the masses below them. Christianity says, "The great and the strong can take care of themselves," and so seeks to elevate the lowest and the poorest. Christ never warned us against not respecting a king's crown; but His words were, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." As in the family, it is not the son of twenty-one years, but the babe, whom the mother rocks to sleep in the cradle; so, in Christ's family of earth, it is not the full-grown and the mature for whom He most tenderly provides; it is the weak, and those on whom the world's law tramples, that He takes tenderly up with His strong arm, and rocks in the cradle of His love and care.

The elect are whosoever will, and the non-elect whosoever won't.

The growth of Christian life is to be measured by the growth of *love;* and love itself is to be measured in its pro-

gressive states by its restfulness, its undisturbed trust, its victory over every form of fear. The state of perfect loving is incompatible with distrust. When the heart is first awakened to affection, it is disturbed and agitated. It fluctuates with every shade of hope and fear alternately. It rushes from one extreme of confidence to the opposite of doubt. But this is only while it is *filling*. The heart beginning to love is like a bay into which the star-drawn tides are rushing. The waters come with violence. They stir up the sand and sediment. They dash and murmur on the edges of the shore. They whirl and chafe about the rocks, and the whole bay is agitated with strife and counterstrife of swirling waters, until they have nearly reached their height. Then, when great depth is gained, when the shores are full, when no more room is found for the floods, the bay begins to tranquillize itself, to clear its surface; and effacing every wrinkle, and blowing out every bubble, and hushing every ripple along the shore, it looks up with an open and tranquil face into the sky, and reflects clearly the sun and moon that have drawn it thither. And so does the soul, while filling, whirl with disquiet, and fret its edges with wrinkles and eddies; but when it is filled with love, it rests and looks calmly up, and reflects the image of its God!

THE truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it, and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures, and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpretation. Sometimes, when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call gold, newly dug, new gold.

GOD is a Being who gives everything but punishment in over measure. The whole Divine character and administration, the whole conception of God as set forth in the Bible and in nature, is of a Being of munificence, of abundance, and superabundance. Enough is a measuring word—a sufficiency, and no more; economy, not profusion. God never deals in this way. With Him there is always a magnificent overplus. The remotest corner of the globe is full of wonder and beauty. The laziest bank in the world, away from towns, where no artists do congregate, upon which no farm laps, where no vines hang their cooling clusters, nor flowers spring, nor grass invites the browsing

herd, is yet spotted and patched with moss of such exquisite beauty, that the painter who in all his life should produce one such thing would be a master in art and immortal in fame, and it has the hair of ten thousand reeds combed over its brow, and its shining sand and insect tribes might win the student's lifetime. God's least thought is more prolific than man's greatest abundance.

At first babes feed on the mother's bosom, but always on her heart.

All the might of the world is now on the side of Christianity. Those barbarous, inchoate powers which still cling to heathenism, are already trembling before the advancing strides of the Christian nations; Christian just enough to rouse all their energies, and to make them intensely ambitious and on the alert to increase their own dominion, without having learned Christianity's highest lesson, the lesson of love.

Even that heathenism which seems to have some power, is only waiting for its time of decay. In vast, undisturbed forests, whose intertwining boughs exclude the light, moisture is generated, and rills, fed by marshes and quiet pools, unite to form running rivers. But let the trees be cut down, and the ground be laid open to the sun, and the swamps will dry up, and the rivers run no more. So is it with the Brahmins, and with all the effete teachers of heathenism. As long as the dense shadows of ignorance brood over the people, they will possess some little trickling power; but let the light of knowledge shine in upon the masses, and the channels of their influence will dry up and be forgotten.

Already, war, with its bloody hand, raps at the gate of empire in India and in China. England presses upon them. Russia is steadily moving through craunching snows to the southward. The great nations, like lions roused from their lairs, are roaring and springing upon the prey, and the little nations, like packs of hungry wolves, are standing by, licking their jaws, and waiting for their share of the spoils. The world is out hunting—what? Heathenism. And it will be caught; it will be unearthed. A little while and there will be no den so deep, or forest so dark, or island so remote, that it can find refuge.

Conceited men often seem a harmless kind of men, who,

by an overweening self-respect, relieve others from the duty of respecting them at all.

In my schoolboy drawing lessons, when I came to the human face, my master gave me first the eyes to practise upon, and then the nose, and then the mouth, and then the ears, and then the brow and hair, and after long weeks the day came when I was to combine them. I knew where to set the eyes, one over against the other, where to draw down the nose, and to open the mouth, and to place the ears, and to shade the hair about the forehead; and so, at last, I had a perfect face. Now, God is the great draught-master, and the world is His pupil. Here and there, through laws and institutions, He is developing the single features, and at length the day will come when they shall be combined to form a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus.

At the Military Academy, the soldiers are taken separately to the drill-room, and there the martinet puts them through all the steps, and passes, and gestures, which they are required to learn; and when they have been trained and disciplined, they come to the parade ground; and then, at the word of command, platoons march, and squadrons wheel, and the great army, as one man, moves to the voice of its leader. Now, God's formative influences in this world are His military academies, His drill-rooms, where for centuries the soldiers of the cross have been trained; but the day is coming when He shall put to His lips the trumpet of announcement, and when, with uplifted standard and triumphal music, He shall lead forth His vast army to go round and round the world with victory!

How in the household are garments quilted, and wrought, and curiously embroidered, and the softest things laid aside, and the cradle prepared to greet the little pilgrim of love when it comes from distant regions, we know not whence. Now, no cradle for an emperor's child was ever prepared with such magnificence as this world has been for man. It is God's cradle for the race; curiously carved and decorated, flower-strewn and star-curtained. But because it is the cradle, and because we are yet in our infancy, God had not scope to give Himself expression. What is to come we know not. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

As prisoners in castles look out of their grated windows at the smiling landscape where the sun comes and goes; so we, from this life, as from dungeon bars, look forth to the heavenly land, and are refreshed with sweet visions of the home that shall be ours when we are free.

CHRIST declared without qualification, "I am the light of the world." What thunderous strokes should beat down the audacious man who should dare to say this! If Christ had not been the absolute One, he would have said, "I am the moon, shining by night, but my spoused one, the sun, from whom I receive my beams, shines by day."

Again: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." What man would dare to say of merely physical things, "If any man lacks knowledge, let him come to me?" Neither Humboldt, nor Liebig, nor Agassiz would dare to say this, even of the departments in which they are pre-eminent, how much less of the whole range of learning! yet Christ, disdaining physical things, appeals at once to the soul with all its yearnings, its depths of despair, its claspings,—like a mother feeling at midnight for the child whom death has taken,—its infinite outreachings, its longings for love, and peace, and joy, which nothing can satisfy this side of the bosom of God, and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." He stands over against whatever want there is in the human bosom, whatever hunger there is in the moral faculties, whatever need there is in the imagination, and says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

THERE is no heresy in the long list of heresies which have invaded the Church, like the heresy of negativeness, of inaction, of death. The dead man is the great heresiarch.

NOWHERE in the Bible is it said, "Give Christ what is due to Him, but leave some store for God when you reach heaven." On the contrary, we are pressed, we are urged, we are crowded, we are touched by the Bible on every hand, as summer soil is by summer sun, to spring forth in all growths, both high and low, and to give them all into the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Should a vine wind its thousand tendrils round a trellis, its life would be destroyed if they were rudely cut and torn away. Now, the soul has more tendrils than any climbing vine, and if they have all clung about the Lord

Jesus as their Divine support, how worse than death will it be to wake up in the awful judgment to find that he is but a creature, and to be wrenched for ever from Him! If Christ be not God, then to worship Him is idolatry, and the Father has deluded and deceived the world.

O Lord Jesus! my heart cries out from its depths that Thou art very God. In Thee I find rest and satisfaction. Thy heart opens like summer to one who navigates from high northern latitudes, and takes me into its tropical embrace. All thoughts and feelings that rise, singing, in my soul, fly home to Thee as birds to their nests. And thy stores are infinite. When the mother tires of the child, and puts it away from the bosom where it draws its sweet life; when the friend who has yearned for love says to the loving one, "Enough, I am sated;" when the soul that has known only dreary wastes of experience, having come at last to a realm of song and bloom, calls back the darkness and the desert; even then, O Lord, I shall not weary of Thee! But where in my heart there is one drop of affection, I would increase it till it should be as the unmeasured ocean; where now I look at Thee with adoring eyes, I would multiply my glances till my face should glow as does the sky when night reveals the stars; I would dedicate myself to Thee—various, universal, total self—to Thee, my King and my God!

THERE are many professing Christians who are secretly vexed on account of the charity they have to bestow, and the self-denial they have to use. If, instead of the smooth prayers which they *do* pray, they should speak out the things which they really feel, they would say, when they go home at night, "O Lord, I met a poor wretch of yours to-day, a miserable, unwashed brat, and I gave him sixpence, and I have been sorry for it ever since;" or, "O Lord, if I had not signed those articles of faith, I might have gone to the theatre this evening. Your religion deprives me of a great deal of enjoyment; but I mean to stick to it. There's no other way of getting into heaven, I suppose."

The sooner such men are out of the Church the better.

IF, every time conscience was wrong, it sighed, and every time reason was perverted, it uttered complaints, no one could live for the moaning which would fill his soul.

SOME men, when they attempt to reform their lives, reform

those things for which they do not much care. They take the torch of God's Word, and enter some indifferent chamber, and the light blazes in, and they see that they are very sinful there; and then they look into another room, where they do not often stay, and are willing to admit that they are very sinful there; but they leave unexplored some cupboards and secret apartments where their life really is, and where they have stored up the things which are dearest to them, and which they will neither part from, nor suffer rebuke for.

THE young, who recoil from impositions, sometimes say, "I have no proof of invisible things. I will believe in nothing which my reason does not show me."

The differences between men lie in their power and scope of rising above the senses into the region of the invisible. All men in action, if not in profession, recognize this life beyond the senses. The material man says, "I believe in nothing which I cannot see," and so he goes about collecting facts from observation. But what does he do with them? He sublimes them into a principle, and that is invisible.

You may unscrew and take off the end of a telescope, and you will have only a magnifying glass with which you can examine the objects about you. Return it to its place, and new powers will be added to it, and things which are remote will begin to lift themselves with marvellous clarity. Draw out the tube, and you can pierce yet farther the distance, till at length your vision sweeps the stellar universe. Now, we can employ our reason upon the material things about us; and it is reason still, only in a higher form, when we draw it out and give it a successional power, and behold through it that which lies beyond the region of the senses; and when we extend it to its utmost capacity, and the lenses are all right, we can look through it into heaven itself, and the magnificent background is the glory of God Almighty.

That state of mind in which a man is impressed with invisible things, is faith. It is the use of the mind and the soul power, in distinction from the body power. Men have such a narrow view of what faith is, that they look for it as one would look for a diamond; whereas they should look for it as treasure. Treasure may be precious stones, or gold, or raiment, or fragrant woods; treasure is a hundred things, diamond is but one; so faith is not a special thing, as many people make it. It does not apply to religion alone, but to all the departments of life. It is simply such a carriage of

the soul as lifts it into the realm of the invisible, so that the man lives by his higher faculties, rather than by his lower. Even in the most practical matters, that man succeeds best who has the most of this element. The difference between a merchant prince and a petty trader is, that the trader can work only so far as he sees. He must be able to put his hand on cask, and box, and bale, while he whom we call the merchant prince disdains to stop at what he can see and handle, but goes beyond and deals with the relations of things, and anticipates results, and taking into account time, and space, and quality, and quantity, and seasons, and races, and latitudes, he makes the whole earth minister to his need. This is commercial faith. In affairs of state, the man who looks only at forms of law, and at the daily routine of government, is but a politician; while he who comprehends those great, stately principles which walk, known or disguised, through all things, and who looks forth with clear vision to see the bearing of the present upon the future, is a statesman. This is political faith. There are many people who are so refined in their tastes,—and by refinement I mean the passage of a thing from a gross form to its evanishing point in the immaterial,—that they live in the ideal rather than in the actual. Such have an æsthetical faith. They have so cultivated their eye for colours that they can almost see the gleaming of the precious stones in the wall of heaven; and they have taught their ear so to appreciate harmonious sounds, that they can almost hear the celestial bells ringing sweet invitation to them; and they have so strengthened and purified their social natures that the fiery edges of heavenly affection almost touch theirs, as cloud lightning touches cloud lightning. How wretched will such be, when through death they really enter the realm of the invisible, to find that they have failed of the highest faith, the faith of the moral nature, which alone will admit them to the companionship of God!

May all of us have that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which availeth, that faith which worketh by love, and so, though we have begun in the egg on earth, yet, through God's brooding, before we know it, we shall chip the shell; and though we have lain so long, coiled up and helpless, we shall begin to put forth plumes; and, disdaining the nest, and finding the ground chilly beneath our feet, with every gathering feather we shall pine for the air, and, pining, begin to try those notes which we are yet to learn; and, at length, in some bright and beaded morning, we shall spread our

wings, and rising above the tangle and the thicket, soar through the blue, singing to the gate of heaven!

If we should gather all the flowers that grow upon the mountain sides and in the valleys, and heap them up before God, He would not be richer than He is now; but when we bring ourselves to Him, and affection after affection opens and exhales in His presence, He is richer, and His joys are greater.

Many people seem to imagine that God keeps a gracious apothecary's shop above, with faith, and meekness, and humility put up in bottles ready for purchasers, and that, as they could go into a perfumer's here below, and ask for this or that extract, so they can go to God, and ask for this or that grace. They think if they go into their closet at night, and pray with faith for faith, if the expression be not an absurdity, that the next morning it will be delivered to them. Christian graces can never be obtained in this way. They must be the outgrowth of the life. The prayer for graces will be answered, but God will make us work out each one with fear and trembling. The spire that almost touches the stars does not rise isolated from the ground; beneath it, and supporting it, is the massy substructure, the vast cathedral of stone. So faith cannot soar alone to heaven; it must be the steeple and spire of the whole life-building.

All true ambition and aspiration are without comparisons.

As—in some summer's morning, which wakes with a ring of birds, when it is clear, leagues up into the blue, and everything is as distinctly cut as if it stood in heaven, and not on earth, when the distant mountains lie bold upon the horizon, and the air is full of the fragrance of flowers which the night cradled—the traveller goes forth with buoyant and elastic step upon his journey, and halts not till in the twilight shadows he reaches his goal, so may we, who are but pilgrims, go forth beneath the smile of God, upon our homeward journey. May heaven lie upon the horizon, luring us on; and when at last we sink to sleep, and dream that we behold again those whom we have lost, may we wake to find that it was not a dream, but that we are in

heaven; and may the children for whom we have yearned, and the companions who anticipated us and gained heaven first, come to greet us. Then, sweeter than all, may we behold the face of the Lord Jesus, our Master, our Life, and cast ourselves before Him, that He may raise us up with great grace, to stand upon our feet for evermore!

Some men think that religion is a mere ecstatic experience, like a tune rarely played upon some faculty; living only while it is being performed, and then dying in silence. And, indeed, many men carry their religion as a church carries its bell—high up in a belfry, to ring out on sacred days, to strike for funerals, or to chime for weddings. All the rest of the time it hangs high above reach—voiceless, silent, dead. But religion is not the speciality of any one feeling, but the mood and harmony of the whole of them. It is the whole soul marching heavenward to the music of joy and love, with well-ranked faculties, every one of them beating time and keeping tune.

The religious life is thoughtful, but thought is not alone its nature. It is full of affection, but it has more than mere feeling; it abounds in grand moral impulses. Effervescent experiences are not its characteristic. It is the soul of a man made wondrously rich, moving to the touch of Divine influence, in every way to which so facile and elaborate a creature as man can move. There is no end to its combinations. It shapes itself beyond all enumeration of shapes. It thinks in vast and fathomless streams. It wills with all attitudes of authority and decision. It feels with all moods and variations of social affection. It rises, by the wings of faith, into the invisible, and fashions for itself a life there, glowing with every imaginable ecstasy. And neither one of these is religion more than another. It is the whole soul's life that is religion. When the sun rose on Memnon, it was fabled to have uttered melodious noises; but what were the rude twangings of that huge, grotesque statue, compared with the soul's response when God rises upon it, and every part, like a vibrating chord, sounds forth to His touch, its joy and worship?

Do men go to school because they know so much, or because they know so little? Do men go to a physician because they are sick, or do they wait till they are well, and then go? Yet to hear people speak of uniting with the

Church one would suppose that they thought it their duty to stay out till they were perfect, and then to join it as ornaments. They who are weak, but who wish strength; they who are ignorant, but hunger for knowledge; they who are unable to go alone, and need sympathy and society to hold them up; they who are lame, and need crutches; in short, they who know the plague and infirmity of a selfish heart, a worldly nature, a sinful life, and who desire above all things to be lifted above them, have a preparation for the Church. If you could walk without limping, why use a crutch at all? If you are already good enough, why go into a Church? But if you are so lame that a staff is a help, so infirm that company and ordinances will aid you, then you have a right to the fellowship of the Church. To unite with a Church is not to profess that you are a saint, that you are good, and still less, that you are better than others. It is but a public recognition of your weakness and your spiritual necessities. The Church is not a gallery for the better exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, an hospital for the better healing of those who need assiduous care.

How does one begin to learn Latin? Not charmed with the numbers of Virgil, but stumbling over the grammar; digging at roots of verbs. As it is with study, so it is with religion. No one should be disappointed if the early experiences of his Christian life involve many doubts and fears. A new life, like a new river, has to pick its way, and find its channel. The waters will gather in pools and seem to cease to flow. Rising over the brim, they will shoot through some rugged pass, and be swirled by a thousand jagged rocks; but by and by, when the channel is secured, and side streams begin to add their stores, the river will neither stop nor grow dry. There is no power on earth that can hold back the river from the ocean, or the Christian life from heaven.

God's promises were never meant to ferry our laziness. Like a boat, they are to be rowed by our oars; but many men, entering, forget the oar, and drift down more helpless in the boat than if they had stayed on shore. There is not an experience in life by whose side God has not fixed a promise. There is not a trouble so deep and swift-running that we may not cross safely over if we have courage to steer and strength to pull.

Many of our troubles are God dragging us, and they would end if we would stand upon our feet, and go whither He would have us.

In December the days grow shorter till the twenty-first, the shortest day, when, at a precise moment, the sun pauses, and begins to return towards the north. And then, though the days are constantly growing longer, and the sun coming nearer, yet for weeks there is no apparent change. The snow lies heavy upon the earth. There are neither leaves, nor blossoms, nor singing birds; nothing to mark the summer-time which is surely advancing. But at length the ground begins to relax in the sunny places, and the snows melt, and warm winds blow from the south, and buds swell, and flowers spring, and ere long there is the bloom and glory of June. So, there is a precise moment when the soul pauses in its departure from God, and begins to return towards Him. The fruits of that return may not be at once visible; there may be long interior conflicts before the coldness and deadness of the heart is overcome; but at length the good will triumph, and instead of winter and desolation, all the Christian graces will spring up in the summer of Divine love.

The most you can do to a good man is to persecute him; and the worst that persecution can do is to kill him. And killing a good man is as bad as it would be to spite a ship by launching it. The soul is built for heaven, and the ship for the ocean, and blessed be the hour that gives both to the true element.

There are many persons who have heard so much of family government, that they think there cannot be too much of it. They imprison their children in stiff rooms, where a fly is a band of music in the empty silence, and govern at morning, and govern at night, and the child goes all day long like a shuttle in the loom, back and forward, hit at both ends. Children subjected to such treatment are apt to grow up infidels, through mere disgusts.

The Bible, without a spiritual life to interpret it, is like a trellis on which no vine grows—bare, angular, and in the way. The Bible, with a spiritual life, is like a trellis covered with a luxuriant vine—beautiful, odorous, and heavy with purple clusters shining through the leaves.

*I HAVE seen birds sitting on the boughs and watching while other birds were feeding below. They would hop from twig to twig, and look wistfully down upon them; then, gathering courage, they would spring from their perch and back again, and finding that it did not hurt them, they would at last join the outmost circle, and feed with the others. How many faces I have seen in these galleries, wearing a wistful look as they gazed down upon us while we were celebrating this ordinance of communion. May God give all such wings, that they may fly down and be among His people, and partake with them of heavenly food!

A MAN who should sit down to the communion table, having bitterness against a brother in his heart, would he not do wrong? "Yes," you answer at once. But it is communion every day. The body of Christ is wherever human bodies are, and he who has any bitterness against his brother is always committing sacrilege.

A MISSIONARY sends home his children to be educated. They cannot be taught in the heathen country where he dwells, and so some sister receives the precious charge, and endeavours to supply to them the place of father and mother. They are very ignorant when they arrive, but they are trained and watched over with assiduous care. Teachers are provided for them; they are cultivated and developed on every side, and grow up to maturity, full of knowledge, and loveliness, and virtue. The time draws near when the parent shall come to claim them, and how anxious is their loving guardian lest he should be disappointed! Her constant thought is, "How shall I present these children acceptably to their father?"

As the ship that bears him approaches the land, the longing father can scarcely wait to clasp his dear ones in his arms. He makes haste to go on shore; he finds his sister's house, and when the first warm greetings are over, she leads him in with trembling joy, and says, "Here are your children!" and the son whom he left a fair-haired boy, comes forward, dark-haired, deep-eyed, and taller than his father; and the daughter, who when he saw her last could do little but smile and cry, advances timidly, with blushing cheek, and all the grace of early womanhood. If they have been wayward and intractable, his love in that hour can overlook

* At communion.

it all. If they have been docile and obedient, how gladly does he embrace them. But if, more than this, they have striven to improve every advantage, and to make themselves worthy of their father, and of the kind friend who has guided them, with what rapture does he fold them to his heart!

Christians are God's children whom He has sent to school upon earth, and Christ is their guide and teacher, who desires to present them to Him "faultless," "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." When, through death, the Father comes to take them home, how is Christ's heart grieved to present those who have been wayward and worldly; but they are children still, and the Father's love overlooks it, and they are "saved so as by fire." With subdued joy He presents those who have made no great attainments, but have yet been teachable and obedient, and they are welcomed to the heavenly inheritance. And then with radiant face He brings those shining bands who have been the true disciples, following gladly in the footsteps of the Master; pressing forward through toil and suffering to the prize, and the Father makes haste to greet them, and saying, "Come, ye blessed," folds them with rapture to His bosom!

The entering into heaven will reveal many things unknown on earth. Some whom the world thought saint-like will barely gain admittance there, and others who went all their lives in doubt and dread, will have angelic welcome, and an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

What do the flowers say to the night? They wave their bells, and exhale their choicest odours, as if they would bribe it to bestow upon them some new charm. In the tender twilight they look wistfully at each other, and say, "Do you see anything on me?" and when the answer is, "I see nothing," they hang their heads and wait sorrowfully for the morning, fearing that they shall bring no beauty to it. Though there is no voice, nor sound, yet the night hears them, and silently through the still air the dews drop down from the sky, and settle on every stem, and bud, and blossom; and when day dawns, at the first rosy glance that the sun sends athwart the fields, ten million jewels glitter, and sparkle, and quiver on the notched edges of every leaf, and along each beaded blade and spire of grass, and spray, and the happy flowers, stirred by the wind, nod, and beckon, and

smile to each other, more resplendent in their dewy gems than any dream of the night had imagined. So many Christians, who in the darkness of this life have longed and laboured for graces, yet sad and fearing, will find themselves covered with glory when the eternal morning dawns, and the light of God's countenance strikes through their earth-gained jewels!

THERE are few men, even among the most worldly, who do not expect to be converted before they die; but it is a selfish, mean, sordid conversion they want—just to escape hell and to secure heaven. Such a man says, "I have had my pleasures, and the flames have gone out in the fire-places of my heart. I have taken all the good on one side; now I must turn about if I would take all the good on the other." They desire just experience enough to make a key to turn the lock of the gate of the celestial city. They wish "a hope," just as men get a title to an estate. No matter whether they improve the property or not, if they have the title safe. A "hope" is to them like a passport which one keeps quietly in his pocket till the time for the journey, and then produces it; or, like life-preservers which hang useless around the vessel until the hour of danger comes, when the captain calls on every passenger to save himself, and then they are taken down and blown up, and each man with his hope under his arm strikes out for the land; and so, such men would keep their religious hope hanging idle until death comes, and then take it down and inflate it, that it may buoy them up, and float them over the dark river to the heavenly shore; or, as the inhabitants of Block Island keep their boats, hauled high upon the beach, and only use them now and then, when they would cross to the mainland, so such men keep their hopes high and dry upon the shore of life, only to be used when they have to cross the flood that divides this island of Time from the mainland of Eternity.

AS a man who is ignorant of the workmanship of a watch tries to examine it, and after several bungling attempts succeeds in opening it, and then does not know where to find the mainspring or the hairspring, or why the wheels play into each other, and at last shuts it again; so many men attempt self-examination. In the first place, they find it very hard to fix their thoughts. They cannot define their reason; they do not understand the play of their affections,

or their moral powers, and so, after a weary hour they shut themselves up again, and hope that in some mysterious way God will bless to them the effort at self-examination. A man might as reasonably look into a well to see the sun rise, as to look thus into his heart with the expectation of good.

Other men examine themselves on this wise:—They sit down and try to recall all their thoughts, and feelings, and actions during the day, and then they question themselves, "Do you enjoy reading the Bible?"—Yes, they believe they do. "Do you like Sunday?"—Yes, on the whole, what with the music and all the rest, they think they do like Sunday. "Are you fond of religious conversation?"—Yes, if they can have their choice of people, they think they are fond of religious conversation. A vine would never be so stupid as to examine itself thus; but suppose it should, and should call out, "Roots, do you enjoy being down there in the soil?"—"Yes, we enjoy being here in the soil." "Stem, do you like to be out there in summer?"—"Yes, I like to be out here in summer." "Leaves, are you fond of waving in the sun and air?"—"Yes, we are fond of the sun and air;" and, satisfied, it says, "I am an excellent vine." But the gardener, standing near, exclaims, "The useless thing! I paid ten dollars for the cutting, and I have pruned and cultivated it, and for years looked for the black Hamburg grapes it was to bear, but it has yielded only leaves." He does not care that the roots love the soil, and the stem the summer. It makes no difference to him though every leaf spread itself broad as Sahara in its barrenness. It is fruit that he wants. Now, reading the Bible is like the roots in the soil, and liking Sunday is like the stem in summer, and being fond of religious conversation is like the leaves in the sun and air. If religion does not bring forth fruit in the life, all these things are as worthless in the sight of God as is the barren vine in the thought of the gardener.

Around the *chefs-d'œuvre* in the galleries of Europe, artists are always congregated. You may see them standing before Raphael's Transfiguration, copying with the nicest care every line and tint of that matchless work; glancing constantly from their canvas to the picture, that even in the minutest parts they may reproduce the original. But if at one side you saw an artist who only looked up occasionally from his work, and drew a line, but filled in here a tree or

a waterfall, and there a deer or a cottage, just as his fancy suggested, what kind of a copyist would you call him? Now, true self-examination lies in ascertaining how nearly we are reproducing Christ. He is painted for us in no gallery, but His life glows, fourfold, in the Gospels, and our hearts are the canvas upon which we are to copy it. Let us not take occasional glimpses, and work, meanwhile, upon earthly designs; but let us look long and earnestly till our lives reflect the whole Divine image.

Coming once down the Ohio River when the water was low, we saw just before us several small boats aground on a sandbar. We knew the channel was where they were not, and shaping our course accordingly, we went safely by. They saw our intention, and taking advantage of the light swell we created as we passed them, the nearest ones crowded on all steam and were lifted off the bar. Now, when in life's stream you are stranded on some bar of temptation, no matter what it is that makes a swell, if it is only an inch under your keel, put on all steam and swing off into the current. Oh, what joy to glide down the river between green and flowery banks, and to know that every hour is bringing you nearer home!

Our people, nomadic as the Arabs, impetuous as the Goths and Huns, pour themselves along our Western border, carrying with them all their wealth and all their institutions. They drive schools along with them as shepherds drive sheep, and troops of colleges go lowing over the Western plains, like Jacob's kine.

When I lived at the West, and preached sometimes every day and evening in the week, in order to rest myself, upon my return home, I often took up some botanical work and studied it, and in this way made myself acquainted with the history and cultivation of many plants which I had never seen. I even became a horticultural editor, and wrote familiarly of flowers which were known to me only through the botanist's description. When I came East, and went into a hothouse, I had to ask the names of the rarer plants, for I had never had their seeds, nor seen them growing in my garden. One flower particularly attracted my attention, and I said to the gardener,—

"What is this?"

"A Marie Louise."

"But I do not know of what family it is."

He looked at me incredulously, for he had taken my paper, and supposed me learned in horticulture, as he answered,—

"It is a cineraria, sir."

Now, there are many Christians who can talk learnedly of faith and humility, but who have never had them as seeds in their heart's garden, much less as perfect flowers, and who know so little of their real nature, that when they see them blooming in some rich Christian heart, they have to ask their names before they can recognize them.

THERE is no faculty of the human soul so persistent and universal as that of hatred. There are hatreds of race; hatreds of sect; social and personal hatreds. If thoughts of hatred were thunder and lightning, there would be a storm over the whole earth all the year round. Twenty people cannot be together, but some one suffers from their conversation. Let a man come into the company who from some cause is obnoxious to them, and no sooner does he depart than the ill-smelling flowers of hatred swell their buds, and give forth their malign influences through the room. Towards many people we live in a state of negative dislike, which requires only a spark to kindle into a positive flame of hatred. Now, of all this Christ says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemies." "Is there not an error in that translation?" you say, for when the Bible reads as people do not wish it to, they think there is some mistake in the Greek. No, there is no error in the translation. "But it only means that we should feel kindly towards them, and let them alone." Not at all. "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." You must not only chain these thoughts of hatred, and put them down into the dungeon, but you must call up a choir of sweet singers in their places. Every time your enemy fires a curse, you must fire a blessing, and so you are to bombard back and forth with this kind of artillery. The mother grace of all the graces is Christian good-will.

THE pulpit should be like the key-board of an organ, and the Church like the pipes. It is my business to press down the keys here, and it is yours to respond out there. Christian life ought to be so exhibitory, that when you look at a Christian you will know what God's truth is. If one comes to me and asks the meaning of faith, and humility, and charity, I ought to be able to point to one man and say, "There is faith," and to another, "There is humility," and so on through all the Church and all the graces. Christ's kingdom will not come until His disciples are such "living epistles, known and read of all men."

I BELIEVE there are many in this congregation who wake every morning to pray, and who never let the evening shadows go without perfuming them with their grateful thanks for the mercies of the day; who study their Bibles more than many professing Christians; and who believe that the life they now live is by faith in the Son of God, but who yet do not wish to have it known, and shrink from joining the Church, and making a public acknowledgment of the debt they owe to Christ. They mean to *be* Christians, but not to avow themselves such. Thus they will leave the world to suppose that their manifest virtues are self-cultured, and that Christian lives may be led without Christ.

If I were a pupil of Titian, and he should design my picture, and sketch it for me, and look over my work every day and make suggestions, and then, when I had exhausted my skill, he should take the brush and give the finishing touches, bringing out a part here and there, and making the whole glow with beauty, and then I should hang it upon the wall and call it mine, what a meanness it would be! When life is the picture, and Christ is the designer and master, what greater meanness is it to allow all the excellences to be attributed to ourselves!

The engineer of an express train sees, just ahead, a switch wrongly turned, and knows that if he cannot stop the train it will go over the bank and be whelmed in instant destruction. The conductor jumps out, and the passengers after him, and run away across the fields; but the bold engineer resolves to share the fate of the engine. Speedily he reverses the action, and with all his strength rolls back the wheels. Just as the fatal point is reached, they cease to move, and the train is saved! What meanness would it be, when, unharmed, they reach the town, for the conductor to say, "We

were in great danger, but by my presence of mind I saved the train!" Yet what greater meanness is it for us to take the credit to ourselves, when Christ saves us from the perils which lie in our way to eternity!

People sometimes say, "I am not a Church member, but I am a better man than Mr. A., or Mr. B., who is." Perhaps you are; but it is Christ, through the minister and the Church, who has made you so. God's influences come in upon you in mighty tides, and purify your life, and you have no right to claim for yourself the graces which belong to Christ.

A MAN might frame and let loose a star to roll in its orbit, and yet not have done so memorable a thing before God, as he who lets go a golden-orbed thought to roll through the generations of time.

Do you ask, "Why not do away with the Church, if its members make so many mistakes?" Would you take away the lighthouse because careless mariners, through wrong observations, run their ships high and dry upon the shore? Would you put out the lamp in your house because moths and millers burn their wings in it? What would the children do?

IT would be a dreadful thing to me to lose my sight; to see no more the faces of those I love, nor the sweet blue of heaven, nor the myriad stars that gem the sky, nor the dissolving clouds that pass over it, nor the battling ships upon the sea, nor the mountains with their changing lines of light and shade, nor the loveliness of flowers, nor the burnished mail of insects. But I should do as other blind men have done before me; I should take God's rod and staff for my guide and comfort, and wait patiently for death to bring better light to nobler eyes. Oh ye who are living in the darkness of sin! turn before it is too late to the light of holiness, else death will bring to you, not recreation, but retribution. Earthly blindness can be borne, for it is but for a day; but who could bear to be blind through eternity?

As birds in the hour of transmigration feel the impulse of southern lands, and gladly spread their wings for the realm of light and bloom, so may we, in the death hour, feel the sweet solicitations of the life beyond, and joyfully soar from

the chill and shadow of earth to fold our wings and sing in the summer of an eternal heaven!

It is a part of our physiological nature that, in order to the healthful development of our moral faculties, they must be placed highest, else they can no more flourish than could a plant growing under the shade and drip of trees. But most men make no provision for these faculties. Like a lighthouse, built well from foundation upwards, but without any place for the lantern, so many men build carefully their lower natures, but never rear the highest storey. As a musical instrument might have the bass and tenor very well tuned and concordant, while, if you ran your fingers over the higher notes all would be clash and jargon, so men say, "I must compose and harmonize myself to natural laws for the sake of health," and thus they tune the bass; and then they say, "I must have peace at home, and peace in my neighbourhood," and so they regulate their social affections; and there are lofty flights of reason, and imagination, and art, and poetry, and music, and thus they tune the tenor; but when they come to the highest notes, which were meant to be sweet to the ear of God, there is neither regularity nor concordance. All is void, vast, and mysterious in their moral nature.

* It does my soul good to hear from you such cheerful testimony to the value of Christ's presence and blessing in affliction. At night, when a railroad train, having stopped at a station, is about to start again, in order that the conductor may know that everything is as it should be, the brakeman on the last car calls out through the darkness, "All right here!" and the next man takes up the word, "All right here!" and the next echoes, "All right here!" and so it passes along the line, and the train moves on. It does me good to sit here while you speak of the life you are guiding through the world's darkness, and pass the word from one to another, "All right here!" All is right everywhere when the heart is right.

There never was a ray of starlight in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky; only the red glare of torches ever lights its walls. So there are many men whose minds are Mammoth

* At a Church prayer meeting, where many had expressed their gratitude for God's sustaining grace in trial.

Caves, all underground, and unlighted, save by the torches of selfishness and passion.

A SHIP that has been driven by wave and tempest far up on the beach, where no tide can ever come to lift her off, but that lies there, high and dry, seams gaping, sails rotting, spars falling, hated of earth and driven out from the water, is not half so pitiable an object as a great man who by policy, policy, policy, has been carried out of the deep channels of honour, and lies all awreck upon the shore of good men's opinions.

"THESE troublesome vines," exclaims the vintner, "why can they not grow upright like bushes?" And one man comes to him and says, "It is all because you have tied them to oak stakes. If you will get cedar stakes you will have no difficulty." The vintner goes to the forest for cedar stakes, but still the vines creep and cling. Another man says, "Cedar stakes are not good; you must have hickory;" and he gets hickory, but the vines clasp them also. Another man says, "It is not hickory, but chestnut stakes that you need;" and so he gets chestnut stakes, but it is all the same to the vines. At length there comes a man who says, "Your course is wrong from beginning to end. If you will throw away all your stakes, and stop your training, and leave the vines to nature, you will have none of these clambering, wild-roaming, embracing ways." So the vintner pulls up the stakes, and clears the piles of timber from the ground, and leaves the vines unpropped. And now do they grow upright, and cease to throw out tendrils and clasping rings? No. It is their nature to cling to something; and if you will not give them help to climb upward, they will not on that account cease to reach out, but will spread all over the ground, clasping cold stones, and embracing every worthless stick, and the very grass.

Now, our religious nature, like the vine, must have something to cling to; and one man says, "The Brahminical system is as good as the Christian;" and another says, "The old Greek mythology is better than either;" and another says, "Catholicism is preferable to the Protestant form of Christianity;" and then comes a man who declares that all systems are extraneous and hurtful, and that if we were left to grow up unprejudiced, with the light and laws of nature, such a thing as a religious system would never be known

nor needed. "First," he says, "the nurse befools the child, and then the mother takes him, and then the priest and the Church; and so he is educated to false views from the beginning." The truth of the matter is this: Religious systems do not create the religious nature in man. The religious nature itself, craving and longing for development, creates both the systems and the priests who minister in them. The heart, with its thousand tendrils, reaches forth to God, and in its reaching clasps whatever it may.

A student, annoyed by the notes of the canary bird in his window, says, "It is the robin in the opposite cage that makes the canary sing," and so he takes the robin away; but still the song goes on. It was not its companion that made it call, but something yearning out of its own little bosom; and because of this yearning, whether alone or with its mates, in summer or winter, in light or darkness, it still will sing. So the heart yearns and calls for God; not because of outward solicitation, but because of the longing, the want it feels within. No difference of teachers or systems can change this nature of the soul. The ocean is the same, whatever craft sail up and down upon it, whether they be pleasure-boats, brigs, merchant ships, pirates, or men-of-war; so whatever religious navigators may be going up and down the sea of life, its depths, and shores, and distant haven remain the same. The stars never change for astrologers or astronomers. They roll calmly above storms and above opinions. So man's nature does not vary for circumstances, or conflicting views, but still wants God above, and fellow-man below.

Many of you are ashamed of these cravings. You know that you are never satisfied; that at every achievement your soul cries out for something more; but you will not acknowledge that these outreachings are home-sicknesses for God. I know you will not bear to be told this directly, and so, being crafty, I catch you with guile; and sometimes by memories of childhood, and sometimes by perils of manhood, sometimes by love, and sometimes by fear, I seek to gain your attention, and to show you that your great want is God. There are bells in your soul which God has hung, and which were meant to sound forth His praise, but you say, "No; there shall be no chime;" and you cut off the ropes, so that they cannot be rung. If I can I will steal up to the belfry, and with good blows will make them speak; and if that is

not permitted, I will yet throw up words from without, as boys cast stones, to strike the mute bells and arouse their echoes.

Many will say, "I can find God without the help of Bible, or Church, or minister." Very well. Do so if you can. The Ferry Company would feel no jealousy of a man who should prefer to swim to New York. Let him do so if he is able, and we will talk about it on the other shore; but probably trying to swim would be the thing that would bring him quickest to the boat. So God would have no jealousy of a man's going to heaven without the aid of Bible, or Church, or minister; but let him try to do so, and it will be the surest way to bring him back to them for assistance.

However various our wants may seem, what we all need is God. He has given us the earth for our body, but He himself is the soil in which our souls must root; the eternal help, the source of succour and all supply, the bread of life, and the water of life. Feeding upon Him, we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, but be satisfied.

If I had been made a firefly, it would not become me to say, "If God had only made me a star, to shine always, then I would shine." It is my duty, if I am a firefly, to fly and sparkle, and fly and sparkle; not to shut my wings down over my phosphorescent self, because God did not make me a sun or a star.

The tides come twice a-day in New York harbour, but they only come once in seven days in God's harbour of the sanctuary. They rise on Sunday, but ebb on Monday, and are down and out all the rest of the week. Men write over their store door, "Business is business," and over the church door, "Religion is religion;" and they say to religion, "Never come in here," and to business, "Never go in there." "Let us have no secular things in the pulpit," they say; "we get enough of them through the week in New York. There all is stringent and biting selfishness, and knives, and probes, and lancets, and hurry, and work, and worry. Here we want repose, and sedatives, and healing balm. All is prose over there; here let us have poetry. We want to sing hymns, and to hear about heaven and Calvary; in short, we want the pure Gospel, without any worldly intermixture." And so they desire to spend a pious, quiet Sabbath, full of pleasant imaginings and peaceful reflections; but when the

day is gone, all is laid aside. They will take by the throat the first debtor whom they meet, and exclaim, "Pay me what thou owest! It is Monday." And when the minister ventures to hint to them something about their duty to their fellow-men, they say, "Oh, you stick to your preaching. You do not know how to collect your own debts, and cannot tell what a man may have to do in his intercourse with the world." God's law is not allowed to go into the week. If the merchant spies it in his store, he throws it over the counter. If the clerk sees it in the bank, he kicks it out at the door. If it is found in the street, the multitude pursue it, pelting it with stones, as if it were a wolf escaped from a menagerie, and shouting, "Back with you! You have got out of Sunday!" There is no religion in all this. It is mere sentimentalism. Religion belongs to every day; to the place of business as much as to the Church.

High in an ancient belfry there is a clock, and once a-week the old sexton winds it up; but it has neither dial-plate nor hands. The pendulum swings, and there it goes, ticking, ticking, day in and day out, unnoticed and useless. What the old clock is, in its dark chamber, keeping time to itself, but never showing it, that is the mere sentimentality of religion, high above life, in the region of airy thought; perched up in the top of Sunday, but without dial or pointer to let the week know what o'clock it is, of Time, or of Eternity!

Many persons hang themselves on some crotchet or text in the closet, as a pot is hung over a slow fire, simmering and waiting to boil. They heap up their experiences for fuel, and wait for the time to come when they shall be so heated that they shall boil over in prayer. This may sometimes be a profitable religious exercise, but those who practise it should not deem it the only one, and make it tyrannize over all the rest.

Every man in a Christian Church ought to feel that he uses the power of the whole, yet never so as to take away from him the need of individual exertion. If we have experience, any brother has a right to come to us and say, "Put your experience, as a bridge, over that stream which I must cross. I want timber there to walk on."

Men secrete their religious life through shame, or fear of

criticism, or morbid sensibility; but no man can be a Christian without being luminous. A man may carry his faith so guardedly that no one shall suspect that he is a Christian; but the worst of this is, that God never suspects it either, and forgets to write down his name in the Book of Life.

A MAN'S house should be on a hill-top of cheerfulness and serenity, so high that no shadows rest upon it, and where the morning comes so early, and the evening tarries so late, that the day has twice as many golden hours as those of other men. He is to be pitied whose house is in some valley of grief between the hills, with the longest night and the shortest day. Home should be the centre of joy, equatorial and tropical.

THE whole force of life and experience goes to prove that right or wrong doing, whether in relation to the physical or the spiritual nature, is sure, in the end, to meet its appropriate reward or punishment. Penalties are often so long delayed, that men think they shall escape them; but some time they are certain to follow. When the whirlwind sweeps through the forest, at its first breath, or almost as if the fearful stillness that precedes had crushed it, the giant tree with all its boughs falls, crashing, to the ground. But it had been preparing to fall for twenty years. Twenty years before it had received a gash. Twenty years before the water commenced to settle in at some crotch, and from thence decay began to reach in with its silent fingers towards the heart of the tree. Every year the work of death progressed, till at length it stood, all rottenness, only clasped about by the bark with a semblance of life, and the first gale felled it to the ground. Now, there are men who for twenty years have shamed the day and wearied the night with their debaucheries, but who yet seem strong and vigorous, and exclaim, "You need not talk of penalties. Look at me! I have revelled in pleasure for twenty years, and I am as hale and hearty to-day as ever." But in reality they are full of weakness and decay. They have been preparing to fall for twenty years, and the first disease strikes them down in a moment.

Ascending from the physical nature of man to the mind and character, we find the same laws prevail. People sometimes say, "Dishonesty is as good as honesty, for aught I see. There are such and such men who have pursued for

years the most corrupt courses in their business, and yet they prosper, and are getting rich every day." Wait till you see their end. Every year how many such men are overtaken with sudden destruction, and swept for ever out of sight and remembrance! Many a man has gone on in sin, practising secret frauds and villanies, yet trusted and honoured, till at length, in some unsuspected hour, he is detected, and, denounced by the world, he falls from his high estate as if a cannon-ball had struck him—for there is no cannon that can strike more fatally than outraged public sentiment—and flies over the mountains, or across the sea, to escape the odium of his life. He believed that his evil course was building him up in fame and fortune; but financiering is the devil's forge, and his every act was a blow upon the anvil shaping the dagger that should one day strike home to his heart and make him a suicide. The pea contains the vine, and the flower, and the pod, in embryo, and I am sure, when I plant it, that it will produce them and nothing else. Now, every action of our lives is embryonic, and, according as it is right or wrong, it will surely bring forth the sweet flowers of joy, or the poison fruits of sorrow. Such is the constitution of this world, and the Bible assures us that the next world only carries it forward. Here and hereafter, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The young sometimes say, "By and by we mean to separate the evil from the good, and to become religious; but first we wish a little liberty for enjoyment." At the mouth of the Mississippi, where it pours its immense flood into the Gulf of Mexico, how impossible would it be to stay the flow of its waters, and to separate from each other the drops of the various streams that have poured into it on either side—of the Red River, the Arkansas, the Ohio, and the Missouri; or to sift grain by grain from the detritus, the particles of sand that have wasted from the Ozark, or the Alleghany, or the far Rocky Mountains; yet how much more impossible would it be, when character is the river, and habits, formed one after another, are the side streams, to throw a little dam of conversion across, and separate the bad from the good! Let the stream run pure from its source. What if the farmer should mix cockles and other vile weeds with the wheat, and say, "When the grain is ripe, I will go in with sickle, and cradle, and winnowing machine, and separate them." Would it not be easier to sow clean wheat than to cleanse dirty wheat? You who are young are now at the

sowing end of the harvest field. Scatter only pure seed, that when you reach the reaping end you may find no tares, but only the golden grain.

WHAT a thrifty robust plant is the potato when out in the field it grows beneath the sun! Its leaf so coarse and green, its stem so stout and succulent, it is a pleasure to look upon a thing which seems so to take hold of all the elements of life. But when it has sprouted in the cellar, which has but one north window, half-closed, it is a poor, cadaverous, etiolated, melancholy vine, growing up to that little flicker of light; sickly, blanched, and brittle.

Like the cellar-growing vine is the Christian who lives in the darkness and bondage of fear. But let him go forth with the liberty of God, into the light of love, and he will be like the plant in the field, healthy, robust, and joyful.

AS the pilot boats cruise far out, watching for every whitening sail, and hover through day and night, all about the harbour, vigilant to board every ship, that they may bring safely through the Narrows all the wanderers of the ocean; so should we watch off the gate of Salvation, for all the souls, tempest tossed, beating in from the sea of Sin, and guide them through the perilous straits, that at last, in still waters, they may cast the anchor of their hope.

A FATHER, with his little son, is journeying overland to California, and when at night he pitches his tent in some pleasant valley, the child is charmed with the spot, and begs his father to rear a house and remain there; and he begins to make a little fence about the tent, and digs up the wild flowers and plants them within the enclosure. But the father says, "No, my son. Our home is far distant. Let these things go, for to-morrow we must depart." Now, God is taking us, His children, as pilgrims and strangers, homeward; but we desire to build here, and must be often overthrown before we can learn to seek "the city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

THE sweetest music is not the peal of marriage bells, nor tender descants in moonlight woods, nor trumpet notes of victory—it is the soul's welcome to heaven. God grant that when we die there may not come booming to our ear the dreadful sound, "Depart!" but may we hear, stealing upon

the air, the mellow chime of all the celestial bells, saying, "Come, come, come, ye blessed, enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

THERE is no tyranny more intolerable than a conscience unrestrained by love. Like an ill-loaded gun, it recoils at the breach and kills at the muzzle. A conscience unsubdued by love torments the owner, and bruises those upon whom he lets it loose.

TAKE a sharp-cut young saint, just crystallized, as many-pointed and as clear as a diamond, and how good he is! how decided for the right, and how abhorrent of wrong! He abhors evil rather than loves good. He has not yet attained to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But years will teach him that love is more just than justice; that compassion will cure more sins than condemnation; and that summer will do more, with silent warmth, to redeem the earth from barrenness, than winter can with all the majesty of storms and the irresistible power of her icy hand.

WHEN we receive a grace, it is not because God, out of His infinite stores, takes a grace and hands it down to us, but because it is produced in our life. As pictures are slid into a magic lantern, and then reflected upon a wall, so many people think God slides graces into the heart, and that the man's life only reflects them. But graces are not interjected pictures. Their forms and colours are the substance of the heart. The engineer does not bring the journey to the locomotive; the locomotive produces it. When a watch is rightly constructed, God does not put time into it hour by hour; the regular working of the machinery, so far as the watch is concerned, makes and marks the time. Now, religion, the sum of the graces, is making the right journey heavenward—keeping time to God.

MORALITY must always precede and accompany religion, and yet religion is much more than morality. You buy a camellia, and determine, in spite of florists, to make it blossom in your parlour. You watch and tend it, and at length the buds appear. Day by day you see them swell, and fondly hope they will come to perfect flower; but just as they should open, one after another they drop off; and you look at it, despairingly exclaiming, "All is over for this year!" But

I say, "What! the plant is thrifty. Are not Japonica roots, and branches, and leaves good?" "Yes," you answer; "but I do not care for them. I bought it for the blossom." Now, when we bring God the roots, and branches, and leaves of morality, He is not satisfied. He wants the blossoming of the heart; and that is religion.

To a Christian who has lived all his life long in bondage unto fear, not daring to believe himself a child of God, how sweet will be the waking in heaven! With great dread and trembling he will approach the death hour, and go down through chilling mists and vapours to the unknown sea. And when upon the other shore sweet strains come to his ear, he will not understand them; but fair form after fair form will appear to greet him, and at length, from the impearled atmosphere, God's whole band of gathering and reaping angels, more in number than the autumn leaves out-streaming from the forest when there are bursts of wind, will come forth, filling all the air with music, and minister unto him an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom! It were almost enough to make one's heaven, to stand and see the first wild stirring of joy in the face, and hear the first rapturous cry as they cross the threshold, of thousands of timid Christians who lived weeping and died sighing, but who will wake to find every tear an orb of joy, and every sigh an inspiration of God. Oh, the wondrous joy of heaven to those who did not expect it!

A CHILD lies in his little bed in some high chamber of an old castle, and hears the tempest growling in the chimney, and the prowling thief-winds at the window, and the scream of the spirits of the air. The storm rocks the walls and beats upon the roof, and he shudders and covers his head, and expects at every burst of thunder that the castle will go crashing to the ground. But down in the room below, his father sits unmoved, reading by the fire, only now and then, when the tempest swells, he raises his spectacles for a moment, and exclaims, "God help the poor wretches on the sea to-night!" or, "I hope no belated traveller is out in such a storm as this," and then turns to his book again. In the morning the child hardly dares to look forth lest the heavens and the earth have passed away; but the father only walks into his garden, to see if some old tree has been blown down, or some unpropped vine fallen from the trellis.

In times of peril and disaster, the Christian, through his faith and hope in God, is like the father by the fire, while he who has no such trust is tormented with fear and apprehension, like the child in the chamber. Let him who will, swelter in his philosophic anguish; I will rest in the serenity of Christian hope.

You pray for the graces of faith, and hope, and love; but prayer alone will not bring them. They must be wrought in you through labour, and patience, and suffering.

A garden has heard that the royal garden has a fountain, and sends up a petition to the head gardener that it may have a fountain too. He favours the request, and comes with workmen and the necessary implements to make it. The flower beds are torn up, the turf is cut and removed, the earth is thrown out in piles, and the astonished garden exclaims, "What is this! you are killing all my violets and roses." And now the boring commences, down through the quicksands and the surface soil, till a bed of rock is gained. Then, when the severer drilling begins, the terrified garden cries out, "My foundations will be destroyed! I thought I was to have a fountain." A small stream of water appears, but the gardener knows it would not always flow, and so he penetrates the earth yet farther, till at last, hundreds of feet below the surface, he reaches unfailing springs. Now the pipes are brought, and when they are adjusted, the earth is thrown back, the stones are removed, the turf is replaced, the ground is swept, and the flowers returned to their beds; and day in and day out the fountain plays, falling into its marble basin with ceaseless shower. The plants revive in its cooling spray, the birds come to sing to its music, and the whole garden rejoices in its beauty.

Now, who is willing that God should bore in his heart for the graces of faith, and hope, and love? You pray for them, but when God begins to work, you cry out, "O Lord! save my flower beds. You are killing all my violets and roses." Yet only through this working are the wells of salvation dug in our hearts, and the living waters made to flow.

"Now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love," for love is the seraph, and faith and hope are but the wings by which it flies.

LIFE THOUGHTS.

Second Series.

PREFACE TO SECOND SERIES.

THE Notes contained in this volume are chiefly from memory. The most of them were written during the years of 1856-7, and were committed to paper simply because it was impossible to think of, or to write, anything else with a mind so fully possessed by the memory of the sermons from which they were taken.

The writer has tried faithfully to give the true sense, and, as far as memory would assist, the exact expressions of Mr. Beecher.

It is not the beauty of Mr. Beecher's expressions, nor the startling and resplendent flashes of his thought that this book will show, so much as his presentation of simple and holy truth, in such guise as never fails to interest and instruct all whose notice is gained. And thousands who cannot be induced to peruse long sermons, will cheerfully read, and undoubtedly remember, the vital truths illustrated and enforced in the following pages.

The volume is a testimony to the power with which the mind from whence it sprung influences other minds, and of the *nature* of that influence.

A. MOORE.

LIFE THOUGHTS.

THERE are two views of the Gospel, *both of which* some Churches use.

One view of it is, that it is a power which makes laws for the protection of all men who will quietly yield up their rights, and submit themselves to what will inevitably crush out of them their manhood.

The other view is, that the Gospel is a power which secures to man all the inherent rights of his nature, and which protects him in them.

The first view regards men as mere passive bricks for the building of the palace of society, which is considered the important thing. The latter view considers society as the school for training individual men.

Man is the most important thing created on the earth. Rulers, societies, and systems, are but his servants and protectors.

The Churches are welcome to which one of these views they like best. They shall not have both. I take the latter side, and declare that those who don't believe in it had better stop sending out Bibles. They had better stop ministers; at any rate such ones as I am; for I preach *knowing* that the Gospel is a bombshell in the midst of thrones, and a mine beneath every fortress of power whose strength is used against the people's rights instead of for them.

MAN is required to pour all that is in him—*all* of his life and love—into the bosom of Christ; and when that is done, what is there left for God?

TAKE from the Bible the Godship of Christ, and to me it would be but a heap of dust. I would as soon have all

Egypt raked into a heap, wherein not a stone of its cities, nor a trace of its inhabitants could be found, as that book if its Christ be not God.

THE man who, after having cast his care on Christ, goes to fretting and worrying himself about anything or anybody, is like one who, having purchased a through ticket from nere to—anywhere, and receiving a check for his baggage, gets out of the car at the end of a mile or two, and shouldering his trunk, starts to go the rest of the way alone. Christ never rolls back upon us burdens that we lay on Him; we take them back ourselves. What is a religion worth that will stay with a man in the sunshine, but clear out in a storm? The Christian has a right, and it is his duty, to be free from all care and anxiety. Let him lie on the promises and be at rest. "Oh, but," says the doubting, worrying disciple, "the promises are made to the righteous; and I am so full of imperfections I dare not claim them." Well, brother, if you wait for that righteousness which is by the law, you'll *never* be able to rest on the promises; but if you trust in Christ, *that* is counted to you for righteousness; and your right to the comfort of the promises is as good as though you were as holy as an angel. Christ's love sweeps away the unworthiness of all who sincerely love Him. God has undertaken for you; trust Him, though you know not where to get your next supply of bread.

THAT Christ does not hold men to proper and unselfish motives when they come to Him for healing, we may see by the cleansing of the nine selfish and ungrateful lepers. He knew their dispositions and motives as well before as after He had granted their prayer. God *allows* men to cry out to Him from selfish fear; and He never refuses to attend to any earnest cry. If He did not attend to such cries, or receive such persons, whom would He receive? Dare any man lift up his face and say, "When *I* cried unto God, I cried worthily, from pure and disinterested motives?" The conditions are not, "Come with pure hearts and motives unto me;" they are, "Come, and your motives shall afterwards be made right." A true conversion will do that work. Nothing else will. If you are awake to your danger, if you see, at last, that your only hope is in Jesus, don't stop to examine your motives, or His willingness to receive you just as you are. Rush to His feet this moment.

All that you cannot do, He can and will do. All that you *now* have to do is heartily to *come*. Drop every hope and every dependence but Christ, and give your whole life and soul into His keeping.

A TEAR, dropped in the silence of a sick chamber, often rings in heaven with a sound which belongs not to earthly trumpet or bells.

GOD is more willing to give good gifts unto them that ask Him, than men are to give them unto their children! God could not have struck the foundation note of human desire squarer than He did by this declaration.

THERE is no honour toward God, either in the heart of man or woman. Suppose that I dared to go into a school and take some young maiden—one the least hackneyed in the ways of life, and, calling upon her the attention of all her companions and teachers, declare that her soul was base, mean, and vulgar; that she was without natural affection or human feeling; that she regarded not the good of brother nor sister, and that she returned the affection of father and mother with ingratitude and contempt. Why! she would not for a moment bear such charges—she would die—she would suffocate with shame! Yet I stand here and I charge upon you young maidens and young men, upon every one of you into whose eyes I look—if you have not given your hearts to Christ—conduct infinitely worse than this; because 'tis towards one who is more to you than any earthly friend can possibly be. I charge upon you the meanest, the most base and unnatural conduct that can be imagined; but you sit calmly under *that*, you look me in the face and do not blush, and not a feeling of shame stirs in you, solely because this atrocious behaviour is maintained towards God!

I THINK that the outreaching of God's heart of love has more power in it than the beating of God's mark has. Love is mightier than indignation.

SOME men are, in regard to ridicule, like tin-roofed buildings in regard to hail—all that hits them bounds rattling off, not a stone goes through.

IT makes a difference to God how we act. His happiness

is affected by the conduct of His children; for His heart is the heart of a father. If, when my child sins, a pang goes through my own soul, and I fly to rescue him from farther iniquity, it is because God struck into my breast a little spark of what in Him is infinite.

Christ never stands rebuking before He pardons and helps the suppliant.

God hates sin, because it destroys what He loves. He could live high and lifted up above all noise of man's groaning, all smoke of his torment; but His nature is to come down after man—to grope for him amid all the dark pollutions of sin, and if possible, to rescue and cleanse him.

God hates sin very much as mothers hate wild beasts. One day a woman stood washing beside a stream. She was in a wild, frontier country, and the woods were all around. Her little, only child was playing about near her. By and by she missed the infant's prattle, and, looking about her, called its name. There was no answer. Alarmed, the mother ran to the house, but her babe was not there. In wild distress the poor woman now fled to search the woods, and there she found her child. But it was only its little *body* that she clasped to her heart. A wolf had seized her treasure, and when, at last, she rescued it from those bloody fangs, its spirit had gone. Oh, how that mother hated wolves! And do you know that this is the very figure Christ uses to show what feeling He has towards the sin that is seeking to devour His children?

When we sin, we are not going against a cold, unfeeling law; but are striking, with cruel hand, direct at the living, loving heart of God.

"This loving God," you say, "I can't do it. How can I love infinity—omnipotence? I might as well try to love a cloud, or try to embrace in my warm palpitating affections the vast expanse of ether." True, you cannot love God; you cannot love this expansive, mysterious essence of omnipotence. God knows very well that you cannot; and for that reason among others He condescended to bring Himself down to your capacity—to come within the reach of your affections in the person of Jesus Christ. "God *manifest* in the flesh." From my soul I pity that man who goes behind

Christ and seeks to fasten himself upon God unrevealed. As you say, he may as well seek to embrace with warm love the elastic and invisible air. But it is with Christ that we have to do, and if you *desire* to fashion Him to your mind that your heart may love Him, I will tell you how. Sit down and read His life—not in parts; not a chapter one day, and another the next; nor a paragraph with your coat and hat at your elbow, ready to start for New York; but read His life straight through, giving your mind and your heart time to take in the meaning of what you read. Thus you may view him in his loveliness, and your affections cannot fail of being touched. If you went into an artist's studio to look at the picture of some distinguished person of whose appearance you wished to get a clear idea, how do you think it would answer to have, at your first visit, all of that painted face, except the forehead, covered? Looking at that a little while, you go away and come again the following day. The forehead is covered now, and the lower parts of the face, but the eyes are visible. You look at them a few moments and go away as before. The next day they give you a view of the nose, exclusively; the next you behold the upper lip; next they give you the lower lip, and finally the chin. Now you have seen the whole face; but do you know how it looks? No, you don't. You can form no idea of the effect of such a combination of features; you can't imagine what the expression of the face is; you don't know it from Adam's. Now, who would for a moment put up with such portrait-seeing? We say when we come up before a picture, "Get out of the way: let me see the whole effect of this." But it is in this dissected manner that men look at the character of Christ. Not so do they study Washington, nor any other man of whose character they wish to form an opinion, and of whose personal deserts they wish to judge. Why should Christ be so unjustly treated? Did it ever occur to you that there are four lives of Christ, each one written by men of different minds, that all forms of minds might be suited? Study those lives *by the whole*, and you will find how to love Him.

'Tis not safe for any man, whether Christian or not, to measure himself by any other than God's own rule. Let him draw near to God, and let him judge of himself by how he looks *there*. Let him hold up in the light of God's Word the thoughts and intents of his inmost soul.

PERFECT love casteth out fear. While the heart is filling, the agitations of fear remain; but when the lake is filling by the moon-drawn and star-drawn tides, what commotion is there in its bosom—how the sands are swept about, how the muddy bottom sends its rill through all the waters. There are ripples, and eddies, and struggling currents; there is seething and boiling; there are bubbles and foam, until the lake is almost filled. But as the waters deepen, as the banks grow less and less, the agitation subsides; the sand settles, the foam is blown away, the bubbles are scattered. And when the lake is filled to its utmost capacity it clears itself, and lies unruffled and serene, reflecting in its calm bosom the moon, the stars, and the tranquil heavens. Thus is it with the heart of man. When love ebbs low in his soul he is tossed and whirled by the agitations and torments of fear; but when the Spirit of God flows in and fills his heart with Divine love, the tumults are stilled; and looking up with confidence and joy, the man reflects from his overflowing soul the image of his God and Father.

FARMERS have learned a lesson which many moralists have not learned,—namely, that when seed is sown, grain must be looked for at the latter end of the harvest, and not at the beginning.

CHRIST reveals Himself unto His own in ten thousand ways, but often they do not know Him when He comes. Many times He speaks to them when they do not even suspect that they have had a revelation. They dare not think it; they fear that it would be a lack of humility to believe that the Saviour really has made good His promise, and come unto them. When we are burdened and cast down, how often does some passage of Scripture dart suddenly into our mind, lighting up all our darkness like a flash from heaven? It *is* from heaven. Christ thus reveals Himself to strengthen and encourage us. We may be beset by sore temptations, and just upon the point of yielding, when the word of warning comes; or we may be feeling desolate and forsaken, having none to lean upon, and yet not knowing how to stand alone, when the revelation has been of love that passeth understanding—of pity deep as the bosom of Almighty God. I sat once under a tree near a little stream, holding in my hands a bunch of flowers. Suddenly, from the air came swooping down upon them a little bird. He

had not seen me; when he did so he instantly fled: but he could not take from me the sweet surprise, and the exciting pleasure of his visit. Thus comes flying to us the new revelation from our God. New in effect though old in letter. Like the bird that only touched me with its little feet and bill, it may but alight a moment on our heart, and depart as suddenly as it came, but it does its work. As, at a touch from some passing thing, the dew-laden bushes shake off at morn the weight of the burden that has been pressing down all their leaves, so, at one shock, do our hearts shake off their burdens, and rise up in thanksgiving and joy.

A MAN who is very much afraid of sins that bring immediate shame and punishment, while he cares nothing at all for those which are of a nature to recur, increase, and form character, is like a child who should come laughing into a room with his apron full of asps, but be very much terrified at being chased by a butterfly.

THERE is no enduring happiness apart from God. As well might a branch broken from a tree in the forest say, "Now I am free—I will grow and be a tree by myself," as any human soul say, "I will be free—I will do as I like and be happy in my own way," when he does not draw on God for his enjoyment. He is a broken bough—a reed plucked up—a waif floating no whither. True happiness he can never know until he comes to draw it from its only source—God.

THERE are sins which, like asps, always carry their sting with them. The instant one meddles with them, he is struck by the poisoned dart. Such sins are generally rare and admitted to be very wrong. But there are others that are far more dangerous. Men in tropical climates may be very much afraid of tigers; but there are multitudes of minute insects flying in the woods whose bite is death. Shall they be less afraid of these?

MEN often hunger and thirst after God when they do not know what ails them. There is cradled in every man's soul, though often nearly smothered, something which is the child of God, ever crying out for its Father. You may say, "I cast religion, priests, and Churches overboard; I'll have no more to do with them, I've seen through them, and they are

worthless." But you *will* have more to do with them, for when you have destroyed the outward forms, the living want will still be in you. Religion is not a thing of arbitrary requisitions, it is an inherent need of the soul. The Bible and ordinances are but evoked by man's necessities, to help him. You come to church, you think your cheeks are hard, and they *are;* you think your hearts are hard, and they *are* hard; you think you can resist the dogmas, and so you can; therefore I shall not present them. I won't throw pearls before swine, but, being crafty, I catch you with guile. Many of you are ashamed that you want to come here; some of you go out cursing because your hearts are touched. But you come again and again. You are what is called gospel-hardened; but in reality you are word-hardened. You have heard the same things presented in the same way so long that you are tired of them; therefore I go out of my way to get new forms in which to present old truths. For your sakes I forsake all set rules of sermonizing, and strike direct at that within you which I *know* will echo to my words. I know that in every man's bosom there is that which at times longs for something better and purer than he is. At your interior consciousness I aim my thrust, I strike my blow. Those old bells in you, I will make them ring. You may turn out the sexton, you may cut off the rope. I'll throw stones and hit your bells, if I can do nothing more. To the truth they shall peal out, and your soul shall tremble at the peal.

Journals are often the devil's vanity-trap. Men write in them pretending to themselves that they don't expect them to be published, when all the time they know that they will be, and are writing under the influence of that idea.

There are men who delight to see evil in those professing godliness. They doubt, they leer, they jeer. Well, there are birds appointed to seek for carrion, and they always find it. By their very seeking they declare their own nature. Don't you imitate their dirty flight. They are of the carrion family.

In some waters a man may drive strong piles, and build his warehouses upon them, sure that the waters are not powerful enough to undermine his foundations; but there is an innumerable army of minute creatures at work beneath

the water, feeding themselves upon those strong piles. They gnaw, they bore, they cut, they dig, into the solid wood, and at last a child might overthrow those foundations, for they are cut through and eaten to a honeycomb. Thus by avarice, revenge, jealousy, and selfishness, men's dispositions are often cut through and they don't know it.

God values men according to what they have had to walk through. Some men are so made that they are obliged to hold perpetual warfare with themselves. They must have a hand always on the engine, or something will blow up in them every minute.

There are doubts and troubles that never can be settled. The only thing to be done with them is to lay them down and leave them. This the Christian must do if he wants peace; and if the impenitent won't do it they will tor. ment him to death. That's all he'll gain by clinging to them. There is no system by which everything can be made to look clear to men while they live in the flesh. As long as we live there must continue to be many things that to us seem dark and mysterious. It matters not. Enough that there is no darkness, no mystery which is not clear to God. To Him let us trust matters, and not take the care of things upon ourselves.

God will certainly take care of you if you bear your whole weight on Him. He may not do it just in your way; but He will do it. He cannot let one of your real interests perish, or be hurt, without the most dreadful perjury of Himself.

Great crimes ruin comparatively few. It is the little meannesses, selfishnesses, and impurities, that do the work of death on most men; and these things march not to the sound of fife or drum. They steal with muffled tread, as the foe steals on the sleeping sentinel.

What a man *has* thought and felt bears intimate relation to what he *now* thinks and feels. There is no such thing as divesting one's self of the influences of former living. A man's life is a concatenation—he is rolled over and over on himself.

There are many men who have a dyspepsia of books.

In love, the freshness and charm of youth have caught men's attention, and they have pronounced the first love best; but it is the poorest. One does not know how to love till he has felt the discipline of life. Young love is a flame; very pretty, often very hot and fierce, but still only light and flickering. The love of the older and disciplined heart is as coals, deep-burning, unquenchable.

A realization of the spiritual nature and the eternal duration of man purifies and elevates our social intercourse. The clearer a man sees man's destination and true life, the more he reveres humanity as a thing sacred and honoured of God.

I don't believe in definitions of feelings or classes of feelings. They can be illustrated—not defined.

There is a time when one is neither one thing nor another; not exactly in boyhood, and not exactly in manhood, but in the limbo of vanity. This is the time when parents become foolish, and not worth minding; when the theology of one's childhood becomes bigotry, narrow, simple; when one yearns for largeness, liberty. This is the time of danger. Infidelity with dark wing hovers near, and if the youth be not now guided wisely and betimes, they become its victims. Having myself narrowly escaped this doom, I know how to sympathize with those who are in danger.

Reason is like a telescope—you can arrange it so that with it you can see only the things near to you, but it has other powers. By drawing it out, and properly adjusting the glasses, you can make what is near you to grow dim, and the things far off to come near, and by and by, when the lenses are all right, you can see beyond the stars, and into the heavenly city, and the magnificent background to your view is the glory of God.

Suffering rightly borne weakens that part of us that should be weak, and strengthens what should be strong.

Will men's prayers be answered? Not if they pray as boys whittle sticks, absently, hardly knowing or caring what they are about. I've known men to begin to pray about Adam, and go on from him away down to the present time, whittling

their stick clear to a point, with about as much feeling, and doing about as much good, as the boy does.

Refinement is one of the outworkings of faith in the spiritual. It is the lifting of one's self upwards from the merely sensual, the effort of the soul to etherealize the common wants and uses of life. A really refined man who ignores Christianity is a creature to beget wonder. A man whose sense of colour is so exquisite that one wrong shade cannot escape his eye, that harmony of hues is his soul's delight, I marvel that *that* man's eye has never pierced the blue, and caught the sparkle of the gems that glow with matchless dyes upon the gates of the eternal city. A man whose ear is all attuned to melody, who has brought music to its highest earthly perfection, and stands entranced by the sweetness of its passing tones, I marvel that *he* never hears the ringing of the harps of heaven. And he who has lifted his affections until no touch of grossness ever defiles them, who has made them pure as crystal from the taint of life's vulgarity, I marvel, more and more, that along their edges plays no fire from the celestial treasury of love—that as the lightning from the earth leaps forth and joins and mingles with the lightning from the cloud, his love is not touched and intensified by the love of God. What rapine! what havoc! when such an one—his life being touched—goes forth, naked and alone, to find that he has stopped infinitely short of any preparation which could make the happiness of heaven possible to him.

Men who concentrate themselves all upon one point may be sharp, acute, pungent—they may have spear-like force of character, but they are never broad and round, never of full-proportioned manhood; which can only be obtained by the carrying forward of the whole of a man in an even-breasted march.

To some it is appointed to wander in Gethsemane, having no variation to their lives except a walk over to Calvary. There are faces lifted up to me from this congregation, into which I cannot look without revelations of their owner's peculiar histories, which seem like flashes from another world. They sit calm and still before me; but I know that no scorpions or vipers can sting as they are stung through every one of their best affections. Every day their tears fall. For

years and years they have borne this, and yet they can bear witness that through faith they have been enabled to endure. More, that though they expect no relief, faith will support them to the end. Is religion, then, a fantasy, when it can so uphold the soul amid all the waves of trouble? I tell you *no*. Let who chooses to do so, swelter in philosophical anguish; I prefer to stand serene upon my Christian faith and hope. You may scoff at it, and call it folly. I tell you it is *a very comfortable thing* to find refuge from every distressful and corroding care in the love of God.

MANY a man never sees into heaven till he sees there through the grave of his little child, or till he loses his wife, not only the better half, but often the whole better part of himself,—that unutterable loss which darkens the house, which darkens life itself; which takes the breath out of the years, and leaves a man to go staggering through the world, like one smitten at noonday with blindness.

I THINK no man could have his arm rot and drop away, from wrist to shoulder, and not know it; but you shall find numberless men whose *consciences* have rotted, from circumference to core, and they know nothing about it. They are less concerned about themselves than when the corruption first began. This *silence* of the hollowing out of a man—this noiseless process of preparing him for destruction, is an element of very great fearfulness. It fills me with grief and sadness, as I look on men, to know that as the snow falls, flake by flake, and no sound tells of its accumulation—that as the dust sifts in, and no noise warns of its choking rise, so silently, so surely, man is heaping to himself wrath against the day of wrath, and does not know it.

SHE was a woman, and by so much nearer to God as that makes one.

LIVE not for selfish aims. Live to shed joy on others. Thus best shall your own happiness be secured; for no joy is ever given freely forth that does not have quick echo in the giver's own heart.

EVERY action of the intellect, save that which is purely scientific, is based upon some *feeling*. Ambition says to Intellect, "Look out for me;" Fear cries, "Look out for me;"

Greed also, "Arouse, sharpen yourself; pierce the darkness, teach me how to gain;" and Love cries passionately, pleadingly, "Awake, be my advocate, think, think for me."

NEITHER I nor my family ever put on the garments of mourning. I will not permit it. Yet I would not refuse to those who think differently from me, the right to change their garments in memory of their beloved dead. But do not borrow of the devil; choose some colour that shall speak of hope, of release, of victory. Draw not over yourselves the black tokens of pollution. Do not blaspheme by naming that despair which is triumph and eternal life.

To some men the mere fact of existence, the simple walking through the air and light, gives more pleasure than others find in the whole round of so-called pleasures.

"THEREFORE let no man glory in men, for all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." This is a wonderful ownership; nowhere else in the world is there such an one. The time is coming when even to the grosser property of earth this will apply; for the heirs of heaven are not to be for ever the paupers of earth; but now it is true of all things pertaining to the realm of mind. The things our Father made are ours, not in the sense of our having any right to deprive others of them, but ours as our earthly father's home and goods were ours in the days of our childhood. Were not our parents, our brothers and sisters, was not the infant sleeping in its cradle, ours? Was not the shelter of the roof-tree ours? Was not the homestead ours? Were not the fields, the gardens, the trees, the flowers, ours, in the full heart-possession, which is the interior, the true ownership? Were they not just as sensibly our own as though we alone possessed them? And were they not ours because we were the children of our father? And were they any the *less* ours because they belonged to our brothers just the same? If we are the children of God, we are the owners of all the good things in the universe. Read here the title; it has our Father's seal. We read of the noble ones, the mighty and holy ones of old, and we say, "These men are ours; they know it now, for they are where the light is clear—and ere many days they will give us loving welcome."

We stand before the gifted, refined, and noble men of our own time; they do not know or heed us, but they are ours, as we are theirs, and soon we shall rejoice together in the glad possession. We walk among the well-known princes of reform and progress. They have an influence over us, that we cannot resist—they make us laugh or weep—they steal our hearts, they direct our thoughts, but they regard us not amid the crowds that flock to hear them. They do not see or know their brothers, but we know *them* right well, and we bide our time; eternity is long—there is no haste there—no over-work, no weariness, and no indifference or misinterpretation, and those great, rich souls shall yet acknowledge and receive us. We are among them now, as a disguised man in his father's house. He sees his parents and his brethren, and he is happy to be with them, though they know him not. He knows them well, and he can afford to wait a while until they discover him. The Christian who lives near to God, finds a fulfilment of the promise that whoever for Christ's sake forsakes aught, shall receive in this world many fold more than he loses. But oh! that world to come! that world eternal which is also ours! Why should any Christian feel himself poor? I believe there is no feeling more universal in the human heart than that of loneliness. At the outset of life every face glows, every heart has its high hopes, and no one thinks much of the insufficiency of the things of time; but when the middle hours of life draw on, not more than one-third of the faces are still bright—two-thirds are disappointed and almost discouraged. When the evening comes, not more than one in a thousand carries the light still in his eye and on his forehead. The nine hundred and ninety-nine have fallen by the way. They have tasted the cold selfishness of the world; their breasts and their sides have been pierced by the jagged points and the poisoned thorns against which rude winds and struggling waves have dashed them. They have felt the utter insufficiency of human help and sympathy; and it has been well for them, if instead of lying down in the bitterness of despair, they have turned for what they so greatly needed to the only fountain of availing sympathy and aid. "Alone! alone!" has been and is the wail of every human heart that has not been satisfied by the love of God. And the Christian, while on earth, is subject to seasons of the same distress, when he will feel unknown, unloved, forsaken of his kind. But he knows that 'tis only for a

moment that his desolation can endure, and then he will enter where all are his, and where they all will own him. *Then*, when he walks with wings, and not with feet, he may measure his possessions, and never again will his heart be cold, or lone, or sad.

PAUL was converted as the germ of a peach sprouts. It splits its shell clear off, and has free room to root and grow. Many conversions only crack the shell; and it is worn so long that the man's Christian character is stunted and shallow for his whole life.

To live altogether in the affections is not safe. Death will overleap the fold and bear away the precious lambs that are therein; and then the man will go wailing through the world, shorn of all that was life to him. A man's life should not "consist in the abundance of the things that he possesseth."

WE are all writing books—histories of our own lives, and we can omit nothing, soften nothing. Only the naked truth can be marked upon those pages.

LET your sorrows, when they rise and swell, be like the waves of the Sound, when they at night flash forth their glories of phosphorescent light—or like the clouds that reflect the sunlight glorified.

IT is a bad thing to live exclusively in taste and refinement. It begets a very wicked sort of selfishness. The man who lives too much in these faculties, will be perpetually stumbling upon things shocking to his feelings, for God forgot to polish all the rocks in this world. He didn't make trees all smooth. There are a thousand things that he didn't put velvet on. It's a pity men should grow too refined to keep company with God in His providences.

I WILL declare the whole counsel of God; I will make it to bear hardest and hottest, and to cast its light strongest and clearest, on the most open and obstinate sins. I will bring it down hissing hot upon the hydra-headed monster, that many think it best to pat and soothe. I will, while the Lord spares my breath, cry aloud, and loudest when men would fain teach me prudent silence—"Woe unto

them that decree unrighteous decrees; that turn aside the needy from judgment; that take away the right of the poor; that make widows their prey; that rob the fatherless; that oppress the poor to increase their riches. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you; but, behold, the judge standeth before the door."

Tears often prove the telescope by which men see far into heaven.

Christian graces are natural faculties which have blossomed under the influence of Divine love.

Sorrows are like clouds, which, though black when they are just passing over us, when they *are* overpast become as if they were the garments of God thrown off in purple and gold along the horizon.

Merchants who play at snatch and grab, or at pinch and squeeze games, have need to be taught the first principles of the Gospel.

This world is like a battle-field full of little hills and hollows; and to each soldier in the war the small valley where *he* fights seems the whole, or at least the chief part of the field. He cannot see the contest on the other side of the hill; and he thinks, in his small judgment, that as go things in his hollow, so goes the whole battle. Thus, either his defeat or his victory looks to him of far more consequence than it really is. But God looks at things by the whole, and in heaven He will show them so to us. When we have fought long in a good cause, and have been at last thrown away backward, and lie gasping, perchance dying, upon our banners, we must not think that the good cause has failed. God's work never goes backward. He takes the large view of things, and when we are come up out of the blood and dust of conflict, He will show it to us, and we shall be comforted. For all that I know to be right and good, I shall do battle till I die. For the encouragement and sympathy I have met, I thank God.

I thank God also for the contumely and abuse which bad men have heaped upon me. It is no honour to be praised by the selfish and evil man, and the oppressor; but I would that my brethren, the sons of my Father, my fellow-workers in the vineyard of the Lord, understood and loved me. But in one thing I am superior to my brother ministers who call me so bad a minister: I know that many of them are good and true men, though over-careful and most mistaken ones; and I know that they have, sooner or later, got to own *me* for a good man. They are mine. They cannot help themselves. I love all that is good in them; and *they have got to love me*. There is no escape for them, "for all things are mine, and I am Christ's, and Christ is God's." Does any one ask for the full meaning of this threefold heart enshrinement? They cannot have the exposition from mortal lips; but we shall all learn its meaning when we get to heaven.

Once I thought of heaven with the cold rigid thoughts of the old teaching. It was a stately, solemn, unnatural place, full of everlasting practising in music. But now I take the liberty of prophecy. I see that when the oriental saints, or when Christ himself described that glorious place, they made use of whatever of earthly beauty and glory seemed greatest to those to whom they were speaking, as images of it. I do the same. Every one may do the same. There is in heaven what will more than satisfy every mind. As a place for studying mathematics it could attract Newton, but I fear that I should hardly want to go there if that were to be the employment of all. But for my nature there will be abundant food, and for your natures too, all various as they are. There is not a day passes over me here, that I do not sicken at some unworthiness or hypocrisy; but I think, "Yonder there can enter nothing that defileth, or that maketh a lie." Not a day but that tears start to my eyes at the sight of other's tears; but I know that *there* "there shall be no more sorrow nor crying." Here, I shrink daily from the contact of those that are mean and sordid; there, all is noble and generous. Here, I am often chilled by want of affection; there, all is love, perfect and undefiled. Of whatever is most beloved by me; of all that is most grand and glorious; of all that is most warm, winning, and delightful, I can think, and yet be sure that I have not risen to a tithe of the warmth and beauty of the glorious home awaiting the sons of God—the joint-heirs of Jesus Christ.

THERE is scarce a time when men meet together, when they could not, if they listened for it, hear the sharp, shrill singing of ten thousand petty bees buzzing around them. Men have violated truth so long, that they have come to lie almost unconsciously.

A MAN'S religion is not a thing all made in heaven, and then let down and shoved into him. It is his own conduct and life. A man has no more religion than he acts out in his life.

"TAKE no thought for the morrow," that is, no anxious, fretful thought. Walk through to-day as well as you can, and God will undertake for your future. When you go forward out of to-day, to worry about it, you are over the fence, you are trespassing, and God will scourge you back into your own lot. When I have been fishing in a mountain stream, I have always found that so long as I kept a short line I could manage my fishing very well; but when I let my line run out, the stream took it down, and there I was, at the mercy of every stick that stuck up in the stream, and every rock that jutted out from the banks. I lost my fish, and I tangled my line; very likely I lost my footing also, and got over head and ears in the stream. Now, most men have cast out their line into life *forty years long*, when it ought to be but *one day* long. In consequence, they are not able to manage their tackle at all; but are pulled after it, stumbling first into this hole, and then into that; slipping up here, and slipping down there; struggling and splashing about in far more distressed fashion than the fish at the other end of the line—and, as a general thing, there is no fish there. Haul in your line!!

BEFORE men we stand as opaque bee-hives. They can see the thoughts go in and out of us, but what work they do inside of a man they cannot tell. Before God we are as *glass* bee-hives, and all that our thoughts are doing within us He perfectly sees and understands.

CAUTION and conservatism are expected of old age; but when the young men of a nation are possessed of such a spirit, when *they* are afraid of the noise and strife caused by the new applications of the truth, Heaven save the land! Its funeral bell has already rung.

CHRISTIANS who are for ever living on their own experiences are like a leaf which has got into an eddy in the river, where it keeps whirling round and round in its own track. You shall see it there, whirling, and shall go away and sleep, and in the morning you shall come again and find the leaf there still. At noon there it is; and when night comes, it is still nothing but whirl, whirl, whirl. Working, travelling, hard enough, to be sure, but making no progress. Now, let something break it loose from that whirlpool, and away it will go, merrily down the stream. Too much looking backward and inward, is bad for piety and progression.

THE assertion that the "common people" heard Christ gladly, seems to imply that the higher classes cared but little for Him.

THE Bible don't pretend to teach fully of anything save man's lost condition, and of his way of returning to God. The truth of it is not a subject for logic; it can only be tested by consciousness and experience. To test the truth of a Christian's experience, try the life of a Christian. Go on your knees before God. Bring all your idols—bring self-will, and pride, and every evil lust—before Him, and give them up. Devote yourself, heart and soul, to His will, and *see* if you do not "*know* of the doctrine."

This is the only way to examine and study into Bible truths; and none that ever tried this way till their hearts grew warm with love to Christ, ever had much trouble about doubting the truths of revelation. There are men who are avowedly trying to get rid of the Bible, and there are other men who sorrowfully fear that it must be given up. But destroy it, and what then?

Why, we should be like men who had burned up all the wills and title-deeds which would have given them a large estate; or like sick and wounded men, who had destroyed all the means of relief. Suppose that the wounded men in the Crimean hospitals had raised an insurrection. Suppose that one man having lost a leg, had said to another who had lost an arm, and to another with a part of his head and features shot away, "Come, let us take no more of this medicine. Let us put an end to the directions and attentions of these doctors and nurses;" and suppose that then the poor wretches had hobbled up, and turned all their kind and skilful physicians out of doors; had ejected Florence Night-

ingale after them, and flung the nurses, and the medicines, and all the surgeons' instruments out of the windows. Would all this have done them any good?

They would thus have got rid of all who could have helped them; but while the doctors, and nurses, and the remedies and balm for the wounds, were all outside of the walls, the wounds and putrifying sores, the burning anguish and tormenting pain, would all have continued within.

But what is a Crimean hospital to this groaning world? this lazar-house of corruption and woe, that goes swinging through the ages to one unceasing anthem of pain. Men would make their fate utterly hopeless, their damnation doubly sure, could they extinguish the only light which can lead them from that doom of unrepented sin, whose horror is, that it for ever gathers blackness as it rolls and rolls throughout eternal night.

THERE are persons who judge of Christians as a man would judge of apples, who should enter an orchard, and go stooping along upon the ground in search of them. He picks up one, a hard, green thing, no bigger than a walnut. He bites it; it is sour and bitter; it puckers up his mouth and sets his teeth on edge. "Ha!" he says, throwing the untimely fruit away, "I hear them speak of apples as being so delicious; I'm sure I don't think much of this one."

He picks up another which looks yellow. There's a hole in it, but he don't know what that means, so he bites into it and finds a worm.

"Bah! apples! delicious indeed!" he cries in disgust; and then picks up a third, which is crushed by his touch; for it is rotten. So he condemns apples, because he has looked for them upon the ground instead of on the trees above his head, where they hang ripe, juicy, and luscious, a chief treasure of autumn.

Just so men judge of Christians, so long as they take for fair samples those that lie rotten on the ground.

THE young minister, having just finished his course, sometimes says, "Now, here I am, poor, miserable sinner that I am, with the harvest of twenty years' study in my brain; what must I do with myself? Must all this learning, must my powers and genius be buried in some obscure hamlet? No! I must have a field worthy of my talents." And so he is found hanging about the purlieus of large

towns and cities, waiting for vacancies in distinguished places. If he gets such a place as he thinks worthy of him, he soon gets a hint from his own people that he had better go down lower; and then he gets the bronchitis, or is called to a professorship, or something of that sort (for people will lie like witches about this sort of thing); and his people will endow a professorship, and place their D.D. there, in order to get rid of him respectably when he has used himself up on their hands. The story that goes out to the world is: "The Rev. Dr. So-and-so was called to take a professor's seat, and has therefore resigned the charge of his people for this new, and, in some respects, more important field of labour."

Now, to all in general, but to young ministers in particular, does Christ's injunction to take first the lowest seat, apply. It is sense and sound philosophy, as well as proper humility, to do so. The call will be, "Come up higher," as soon as the man has filled, and made to overflow, the first place assigned him. Learn from nature how to become great and strong. Look at the acorn: it is content to go into the ground and be covered—it is content to lie long in darkness, hidden away from the knowledge of all. And what then? Why, then it is content to be a little germ no larger than a knitting-needle. And what then? Why, then it goes on for a long time striking its roots hither and thither, grappling itself more and more firmly into the earth, working with all its strength under ground. And then? Why, then it is content to be for a whole year a single shoot no bigger than a whip; and for another year it is content to be two shoots; the third to have its shoots grow a little longer, and be headed by green tips. And for ten years it grows no larger than that a man's strength can uproot it; but in fifteen or twenty years it is beyond the strength of man; and in thirty or forty years it stands aloft—a wrestler with the winds, able to take a hug with storm and winter. In fifty or a hundred years, tempests cannot upheave it from the earth; its foundations are as the rock; they cannot be shaken. Thus should it be with man. Art called to be a scullion, or a street-cleaner? act well your humble part, and you shall soon find yourself in one that is higher; but be sure that God will never commence for you the work of saintship where you are *not*, but where you *are*. Fill full, of yourself, the spot where God has placed you; grow daily till the place overflows with you, and your borders will surely be enlarged. So shall you

rise upwards, step by step, on secure footing, until at last you shall sit down in that highest of all apartments, from which, since its name is heaven, none are ever ejected.

My heart is sick! I see men going to destruction on every hand, and I have no power to stay them.

What a business is that of a preacher! What a calling is that which sends one to seek men's souls, even at the very gates of perdition, and often vainly—only now and then one rescued! If you could know what causes lie at the foundation of this and that sermon that I preach here, with my soul faint with yearning over this one and that in this great congregation, you would not wonder that I say I feel crushed, overborne, by the weight that is upon me.

There are some men who are so proud that they don't intend to enter the Church until they become so good that they can confer an honour upon the Church by entering it. They say, "Look out for a striking conversion, and for a high-toned, consistent Christian life, when I start. I'll set an example to those members who are such a disgrace to the Church that I, sinner as I am, am ashamed of them." Ah! self-deluded man, you never will get God to dwell in your heart until it comes out of that proud frame. He don't expect you to confer honour on His Church by entering it, at least not in the way you imagine. You have got to go in through the door of humility; you have got to come to that state in which you shall forget everything but that you are a lost and ruined sinner, and that your only hope, as the only hope of the murderer, is in Him who will accept nothing but a broken and contrite heart. The language of a man entering the Church is not, "I have become so good, that I will now join myself to the members of Christ, and thenceforth be a pattern to all who know me, and an honour to God;" it is, "I have discovered my lost and wretched condition, and that I am too weak to stand alone. I have cast my soul upon Christ's mercy, and I beseech His children, if there is any strength or safety in the Church, to take me in and watch over and help me." When you have been humbled then you may be lifted up, but "before honour goeth humility." Suppose one went to the wheat, as it waved in the field, and said—"Would you like to be made into a loaf for the queen?" "Yes," answers the wheat, "oh yes, we should like to be presented to the queen," and on it waves,

swelling with pride at the thought of its consequence. But the reaper comes, and the wheat gets a stroke at the roots, and is laid prostrate. "Alas!" it sighs, is this *going to the queen?*" But there it lies, drying in the scorching sun; and then 'tis drawn to the thrashing-floor, and bruised and beaten without mercy. After this 'tis winnowed, and then tied up in darkness and carried to the mill. "Is not this almost over?" cries the poor wheat; but 'tis poured into the hopper and ground to powder. Then 'tis pressed and packed. And that is not all: it is mixed with water; it is worked and kneaded; it is subjected to various rapid changes, and finally to the process of cutting and shaping into loaves. "Ah! shall I not rest now?" sighs the poor wheat. "Yes; *now* you may rest," says the baker; and forthwith shoves the loaf into a heated oven. When baked, and not till then, it is fit to be eaten; and is presented to the queen. If God intends to honour you by allowing you to honour Him, He will lay you low, He will flail you, He will winnow you and grind you, He will knead and fashion you, and pass you through the fire; and then you will have discovered what it is needful to do with pride.

Men should all have their feet on the same level, with leave to grow as high as they can from the charter God put in their souls. Oregon pines are three hundred feet high—how *solitary* their tops must be; but they start from the same place that the shrub does.

Some men—good men after a fashion—think there is nothing in the world so hard as that they are not so high now as they have been. Their pride and their vanity suffer. What is the trouble, friend; can't you walk down there?

"Oh, yes."

"Can't you procure enough to eat?"

"Oh, yes."

"Have you not shelter?"

"Yes, I have."

"And clothes?"

"Well, yes."

"Can't you get along comfortably?"

"Yes; but then I used to live in a four-storey house, and move in higher society. And my children are not where I intended that they should be," &c.

Man! are you a child of God? Have you not the inheri-

tance of the universe by reversion? Only wait a while. Have you not the sympathy and love of your Father, and a birth-right to eternity? What are you grumbling at? Stand upright like a man, a prince. Lift up your front and say in true manliness, "I can afford to stand in the valley. I think I could stand safely on the top of the mountain, but there are many there who could *not* afford to stand in the valley with me."

Prayer covers the whole of a man's life. There is no thought, feeling, yearning, or desire, however low, trifling, or vulgar we may deem it, which, if it affects our real interest or happiness, we may not lay before God and be sure of His sympathy. His nature is such that our often coming does not tire Him. The whole burden of the whole life of every man may be rolled on to God and not weary Him, though it has wearied the man.

Some may be content to regard God as a being of crystalline purity and awful majesty, to be worshipped afar off, and not troubled with the details of daily life and conflict; but others need a God to whom they can come *near*, and on whose bosom they can lean their heads, and be welcome there. They think of Him nine times with a gush of filial love, where they do so once with solemn and shivering awe. They know that He loves each one of His children with a separate and peculiar love, and that He knows each one by name.

Pray out your life to God. "Be instant in prayer," and the only way to do this is to go to Him in all moods; in joy and sorrow, in depression and mirth, in hope and fear; with everything that is in you, or that touches you. Confide in God—make Him your familiar friend. Keep open the path from your heart to the heart of God, and let airy feet be always treading its trackless way.

There is prayer that is too deep for words, or even groans. Have you never lain prostrate before God in the consciousness that His eye was reading all that you could not tell Him?

No need to explain things to God, as one must do to the *dearest* human friend. No fear of His betraying what we pour into His ear. Come boldly and gladly to His feet; let Him be to you as sunshine on the mountains, to attract and warm, rather than as the shadows of those mountains which can only awe.

The heart that cannot open to the eye of man, goes naked and open into the presence of its God. There, all the sealed fountains are unclosed; there, all the secrets which must ever be secrets from the nearest and most beloved earthly friend, are disclosed, and the shrinking and sensitive soul has no reserve. Thus, we have sat down in the forest on a summer's day, and as long as men and boys tramped by, and the clatter and clash of business was heard, there was no movement in the forest; but when the din had ceased, when the footsteps had died away, and we sat motionless as the tree which supported us, there was a twitter overhead, and then an answer from another tree-top. Then out hopped a bird, and lifted up its voice in song, and then a squirrel ran along the ground, and one by one all the mysteries and confidences of the forest were revealed to us. Thus unfolds the soul of man when none but God is near; when it is hungering and thirsting after either the higher or the lower wants of life; when it is yearning for its Father, or when it is home-sick for Heaven.

There be ecstasies in prayer, when the soul exults like birds on a fair morning in spring; and there be agonies of prayer, when the burden of the soul cannot be even groaned out. We must bear the burden of Christ, the burden of souls; this He permits, and when we are before God, wrestling for the brother, the child, the loved friend of whatever name, when we think of that dear soul, glowing amid everlasting light, or wailing amid everlasting shadows, *what words can ease us?*

It is not truth nor philosophy to say that prayer alters nothing, that the laws of nature are fixed, and that entreaty cannot change them. The laws of nature *are fixed on purpose to be used for the granting of prayer.* Any *man* can use the laws of nature to grant the requests of his child. Does he say that God, who made those laws, cannot do as much with them as *he* can?

Spontaneity in prayer we claim, as that which is most natural to us; but far be it from our thought to condemn form for those who can thus pray best. Let no man bind or shackle another man's conscience, or try to walk by another man's light. Let each be true to himself. Oh! let the soul alone; respect its moods and impulses. Judge not each other. Let each sinner pray as best he can, come unto God as best he may, but *let him come.*

The soul of man sways hither and thither like the sea,

tossed by restless yearnings, and passions, and fears; and there is no shore against which it may break and rest but the bosom of its God.

Christ spoke most to the masses clinging to the edge of life, struggling, and straining all their nerves to keep from slipping off. Their most important petition, the burden of their daily cry—"bread," "bread!" not "home," "pleasure," "children," but simply, "bread."

I've seen luxuriant grasses growing on the tops of graves; I've seen flowers springing from the crevices of tombs; and like these are the fair and lovely moralities, and the social virtues which adorn the character of him who is not born of God's Spirit. The corpse, with its corruptions, its wasting flesh, and its decaying bones, is beneath the fragrant flowers.

To understand how the imagery of Jesus seemed to those who heard it, we should try to enter into their circumstances. To speak of the delight and refreshment of water in Great Britain, where it is almost a nuisance, would be folly. To discourse eloquently of the refreshment of the shadow of a great rock to an inhabitant of mountain gorges, where *sunshine* is the thing desirable, would be a waste of power and time.

But when we remember that in the land where most of the Scriptures were written there was, for the greater part of the year, but burning and scorching heat; that there was *no* winter, as we understand the term; that water was as precious as gold; and that the digging of a well was the work of kings and princes; that shadow was a luxury, to attain which hours of sore and weary travelling were accounted well spent—we can better understand the beauty and force of such figures as Jesus uses in speaking to the woman of Samaria.

Digging a well rendered a man the benefactor of his race. "Canst thou do more than dig a well?" was the meaning of the woman's question to Jesus. This discourse of Jesus to her is an example of His usual mode. Never did *He* begin at abstractions or first things. He never began by thinking away back amid mist and mystery; but from the simple every-day events of life, He took His texts, and preached backward and upward to principles. In what entirely

different keys were the two (Christ and the woman) conversing. This was one of those double-meaning conversations that Christ delighted in. The woman and He were standing as two might stand with a wire gauze window-shade between them. He that is within the shade can see out well enough, but he that is without cannot see in. Christ was within—He saw on both sides of the curtain; but the woman stood without, darkly wondering of what water He was speaking.

MEN should not be mere indexes—not condensed and abridged editions; they should be themselves in full. Every man has a right to be all that God intended he should be, all that he has God's commission for in his own nature. And none have a right to hinder human growth. Take off the millstones; untie the bands; give man room—freedom.

COMMON things are dearer to Christ than the refined and exclusive evolvements of culture. Things common to all men are more and better in His estimation than the things that are peculiar to a class.

THE Christianity of the present age is *dead*, compared with what it should be. When I lived out west, our wells were all dug very shallow, and when a drought came, the water failed. Then we sent a man down into the well to dig another within it, and by and by he came to water far below the first well. But if the rain was long withheld, this well also failed. Then the man was sent a third time to dig and dig, until at length he struck the living springs, which flow perpetually, which no drought can affect. Many people think that after conversion religion will take care of itself. That water once gained, there will always be a sufficient supply. There are whole Churches whose religion is but a few feet deep. As long as showers are abundant, this may do; but when they do not fall, often the wells are dry. Let this not be so with you. Sink the shaft deeper and deeper still, until within you bubbles up that living water which runneth from beneath the throne of God. Don't depend on *showers* of grace. Be not at all content until the river is within your own souls.

We must either conclude that the piety of the present day is a different thing from what it was intended by Christ to be, or that He spoke the language of exaggeration. That He

did *not* thus speak, we know by the momentary elevations which we experience, when we rise into some nearness to the place where it is our right always to stand, and can return with rapture the smile of our Father's love. There are seasons when our souls exhale, and sit singing, like birds, in the very tree of life.

Oh! when I look upon the sun, and see what it has power to do—when I see that on the barren soil it flings a warm and radiant scarf of light, and that beneath that scarf springs up life! life! life! and gorgeous beauty, and lavish and redolent bloom, I know that the Sun of Righteousness has a greater power than this, if men's stiff, and frozen, and faithless hearts will but open themselves to His rays.

The love of God! who can fathom it? We soon cloy with honey; 'tis not very hard to satisfy ourselves with sugar; even of bread we may tire; but who ever tired of air? All day we breathe it—at morning, at noon, at night, all night—all our lives, and we are not weary. *Love* is the *vital air* of the soul.

Every earthly pleasure wearies, but of spiritual pleasures we never tire. The more we are filled with them, the more hungry and thirsty after them we grow; and we are more sure, the more we taste the love of God, that it can fill us, and be always about us, and be always peace and everlasting joy.

Why do we not bud and bloom more gloriously beneath the shining of this Sun of Love?

It is because we have portioned Him, we have limited Him, we have not consecrated to Him the whole of our lives. We give him our Sabbaths, our morning and our evening hours of prayer, our feelings of solemnity and self-condemnation, our hours of depression and tears; we go to Him in trouble, and gloom, and fear; we call upon Him early when all is dark about us; but from our business, from our pleasure, from our social and common life, we put Him away. Our brightest and most agreeable, and our busiest and most useful hours, we keep for ourselves and our fellows; but we go with our unhappy and unattractive moods and feelings, with long, forlorn faces, and tearful eyes, to wait upon our God. Can this be well-pleasing in His sight? If a lover or a bridegroom gave his chosen fair a diamond to wear upon her breast, and she should wear it joyfully at all times, save when she came into his presence, and then should carefully hide it from sight, would he not have a right to complain? But what diamond ever sparkled with so radiant a light as

shines a smile upon the human face? and when it is a heart-smile, it hath a priceless value. God gave man power to smile—and man only of all creatures possesses that power—why should he seek to hide his smiles and innocent mirth from Him who made and loves them?

Did Christ keep His religion for the pulpit, and fear to "degrade His office" by mixing with and trying to influence the masses? Did He attempt to keep His disciples unspotted from the world by shutting them up from the rush and turmoil of the world?

Consecrating your life to Christ is not giving up all the pleasures and duties of life. Take all of these that He gives you, and use them gladly and gratefully, as gifts from Him, to be resigned if He so will it. Be as joyful, as happy—aye, as *merry* as you will, while the sunshine is upon you, but when the shadows fall be patient; and be filled always with abundant love for Him. Let that love for Him go into every act of your life, whether civil or religious. Make every act a religious act.

When Christians learn to do *all things* as unto Christ, then will the Church arise and her light come; *but* while religion and ministers are kept pretty much confined to the pulpit, the prayer-meeting, the study, and the family altar, darkness will be on souls and over the earth

There are two great difficulties in presenting this subject: One is, that you all know so little about it; *the other* is, that *I* know so little about it. We have become so accustomed to the *cant* of piety—so satisfied with a heavy heart, and a solemn face—so used to pray and pray, and then go away and forget that every act should be as a prayer—that, say what we may, we hardly realize that love to God should be *love*, or that His love to us *is* actual love—a passion, warmer than ever swells in human breast—real, throbbing, yearning love, that knows us each by name, and longs to have us allow Him to fit us for that larger life where all that is here denied to us shall be freely given.

For in heaven the good things that we have now but in part shall be perfected; and every single pure yearning of our nature shall be abundantly fulfilled.

Here we are like plants which the gardener keeps in pots till they are ready to be transplanted. Often we are in every way very much cramped while here; there we shall have root room, and branch room, and the promise of our

nature shall be more than made good. We shall be made all glorious, and be satisfied with our inheritance.

God does not mock us. He plants no yearning in the human soul which He does not intend to satisfy; He gave no capacity which He does not intend shall find scope for everlasting accomplishment.

I apprehend that the words of Scripture are often more literal than we suppose. The Christian really has truer possession of the things that now are, as well as ownership of the things that are to come.

Alas for the sorrowful, the lonely, and the hopeless, that refuse their rightful inheritance!

The difference in the life of a believer and in that of an unbeliever is the difference of eternity. The latter plans for a few years—eighty at most. He says, "My faculties will improve for so long, and then decay; my genius will lighten for so long, and then grow dim; my friends are my friends while I live; my children I love for all this life." The whole range of his thought of living is within a hundred years.

But the Christian says, "My faculties may fail because of the failing of flesh; but they will rally, and open, and grow for ever. I am not improving myself for a few years' use, but for eternal ages. If my genius slumbers here, it will awake yonder, beyond the stars, and sparkle in the brightness of God's glory. My friends, familiar and dear, are to be mine, and our love is to strengthen and deepen for ever. My children! the grave *may* hide them, but only for a moment; they are *mine*, for the cycles of eternity. Yea, and all that is in the universe is mine, and God is mine, and I am His for ever."

What labour seems too hard when it is done for love? I don't think it would be very easy to induce me to become a basket-maker; *but* were it by that trade alone that I could hope to gain some maiden whom I loved, *I would like to see the man who would sing more than I would over his weaving.* Now, to you whose lot in life is cast in some uncongenial field, whose labour is with distaste and heaviness of heart, Christ says, "Do it as if for *me.* I'll be your lover. Work where you are for me, and my love shall reward you."

The man who knows he has but one talent feels easier about improving it than he can who is conscious of possessing many.

The more a man rises the more earnest is he to do the work which he was sent to do. Life seems short, and every step of it *full* of his destiny. *No man can do the work of any other man.*

To persons sincerely anxious to leave the world wiser and better than they found it, but who feel as if they were as yet almost useless in their generation, let this thought give consolation. Many persons live out half their lives, some even three-quarters, before they come to the peculiar work which they were sent to do. Meantime they are doing good by shedding a right influence.

The mourner over a wasted life may yet be shown that he was fruitful of good when he knew it not. From him there may be going sweet influences like the fragrance of flowers.

Some people blossom almost as soon as they enter life, and then they depart. The flower that opens when it first breaks from the ground, and then dies, is an emblem of our infants that die. Violets are the children and youth who finish their mission near life's entrance, and then depart. We mourn for them, and say, "How mysterious! cut off when so full of promise!" but we *should* congratulate them.

Then there are June flowers, and flowers that do not blossom till July or August. These latter, and the strong September flowers, go all the spring time, and for months after, gathering strength for final putting forth. Their time has not been wasted; though to the eyes of those who know them not they have seemed but idle, homely things. When they do put forth they hold on bravely till the frost kills leaf and flower.

Let not that man think his life wasted who can go home to heaven bearing blossoms, though *late* blossoms, on every limb.

There is something beautiful to me in the thought that there is a specialty of work for each man.

In work, as in character, disposition, history, and destiny, there is a specialty; and when the Church arises to the New Jerusalem, it will not be to sit there as one vast photographic likeness, nor shall one be able to say of its members, "I have heard their history," when the story of ONE has been told.

The history of the Church will be made up of individual histories; and each one shall possess its own peculiar interest.

Your history will be none the less interesting when *mine*

has been told, nor mine when you have related yours. Your head and heart will not be as mine, nor mine as yours; we shall not be mere fragments of a universal Church, but we shall be fully, roundly, and conspicuously ourselves, *in* the Church of which we make a whole, and perfect, and unexampled individual.

We regret that all Christ's words were not saved, even though they multiplied books, as John supposes they would. Yet we already have more than we heed; and necessity demands no more, though curiosity does. When I remember how closely that rough, knotty, gnarled old Johnson was followed, and every word from his lips treasured up; when I think how the words of that incarnation of refined selfishness, Goethe, were saved, I cannot but say in my heart, Why was there no such record kept of the sayings of the man Christ Jesus?

The heart of woman yearns for love more than for any other thing, and when she asks it of God, He replies—"Certainly, my child, if you can bear all that goes with love." But if God loves her, and sees that she is asking what will do her harm, He will not grant her prayer.

The man that prays for wealth may have it, if he is able to bear the discipline necessary to prevent it from proving his ruin.

One who is bound for destruction may escape the stripes that will fall upon the *Christian's* back who attempts to set his heart on mortal lover, or on uncertain riches.

They who make gods of goods, and go bowed down under the gold they carry, are worse off than they are who journey wearily over the hot sands of the desert. For the pilgrims have camels to bear *their* burdens, while they who trust in riches are their own beasts of burden. They crouch down and cry, "More, pile on more;" and more is often given them; for if a man *will* have his portion on earth it is sometimes given him, and so he goes toiling beneath his load, with gold on his back, and hell in his heart, down to destruction.

It has ever been a mystery to the so-called Liberals, that the Calvinists, with what they have considered their harshly despotic and rigid views and doctrines, should always have been the staunchest and bravest defenders of freedom. The

working for liberty of these severe principles in the minds of those that adopted them has been a puzzle. But the truth lies here—Calvinism has done what no other religion has ever been able to do. It presents the highest human ideal to the world, and sweeps the whole road to destruction with the most appalling battery that can be imagined. It intensifies, beyond all example, the individuality of man, and shows, in a clear and overpowering light, his responsibility to God, and his relations to eternity. It points out man as entering life under the weight of a tremendous responsibility; having, on his march towards the grave, this *one sole chance* of securing heaven and of escaping hell.

Thus the Calvinist sees him pressed, burdened, urged on, by the most mighty influencing forces. He is on the march for eternity; and is soon to stand crowned in heaven, or to lie sweltering in hell, thus to continue for ever and ever.

Who shall *dare* to fetter such a being? Get out of his way! Hinder him not! or do it at the peril of your own soul. Leave him *free* to find his way to God. Meddle not with him or with his rights. Let him work out his salvation as he can. No hand must be laid crushingly upon a creature who is on such a race as this—a race whose end is to be eternal glory, or unutterable woe for ever and for ever.

They tell us that Calvinism plies men with hammer and with chisel. It *does;* and the result is the monumental marble.

Other systems leave men soft and dirty. Calvinism makes them of white marble to endure for ever.

You all hate tyrants; but not half so much as God hates a slave. Not that He does not pity the poor slave; but when He looks on him He says, "*This* is not *my* work. I never made this. This is not what I intended when I made a man. I made him in my image, to stand royally before me, to be united to me by royal love, not to become a creature like this."

When a man says to me, "When I saw that mother weeping, and her house burning, and when I rushed into the flames, and at the peril of my own life saved and restored to her her child, am I to be told that *that* was not a good action —that it was a sin in the sight of God?"

Not by me, friend, not by me. That *was* a good action. It was a hint of what there is planted in your nature by

God; and it shows your guilt in not coming to the Sun of Righteousness, that all such things within you may be warmed into a continual life.

A man who is capable of such generous acts ought to be ashamed not to be what the love of God would make him. And if he will not love God, and be made into His image, he needs *no other* condemnation. It is not by the fits and starts of your conduct that you are to be judged, but by its *whole course.* And if the centre and ruling principle of your life be not love to God, you are radically and fatally wrong.

When we tell you that you are without God, you run and gather up all your occasional emotions of gratitude towards Him, and of admiration for Him, and heaping them together before us, say, "What! *I* without God!"

Now, you may feel admiration, even very warm admiration, for God—every refined and thoughtful mind must; and perhaps, when you are on the summit of your joys, just as you cross the highest line, you look off, and say, "Thank God! thank God!" it may be very heartily; but does your gratitude and love for Him go down beneath thought and feeling, and take hold upon the secret springs of your soul? Is your life directed, ruled, and formed by that love? Can you look upward and say, with glowing breast, "Father, Abba, Father!"

If not, your love is but the starlight, and the moonlight, when it should be the light of the fervid sun.

Why, when the sun shines with long slant ray on Greenland, what lives or thrives beneath its power? But when he pours down straight from his meridian, there springs up life and luxuriant growth.

Such love as you speak of is the slant beam of the winter sun, or like the shining of moonbeams on Nova Zembla.

You cannot go to heaven with *that* love. You must be born again. Your *course* must be changed.

Why, suppose a shipmaster starts from New York harbour for the Mediterranean Sea. He goes beautifully out of the harbour, and steers straight for Greenland. Off Newfoundland he is hailed by another sail. His destination is inquired and given.

"Bound for Malta!" shouts the stranger. "You? Why, you're steering for the North Pole."

"Don't tell me *that*," returns our captain, very much offended—"don't tell me that. My ship is good and well stored; my men are good, and they find me the most

generous of captains. They have long sleeping hours, and short watches; they have abundance of all that is good for food. In my cabin are plenty of books and flowers, and we have fine times down there. We enjoy ourselves very much indeed—don't tell me that all this time we are on our way to any place but Malta; I don't believe it."

The stranger passes on, saying derisively—"I don't care how good you are to your men, or how many good books or beautiful flowers you have got below; all this is very fine, no doubt; but I say that the man that's going to Malta, and heading direct for the North Pole, is *a fool*." And so he is; all his flowers won't save him. His *course* must be changed; and it's just so about the sinner. He's heading for hell; and all the flowers, and all the good things that are in him, won't save him, if he don't *turn short about*. He is living for self, when he should be living for God. Self is his idol, when he should worship God. He is all wrong, wrong, and will certainly be lost if he does not come to Jesus for help, safety, and grace to fit him for heaven.

"But," do you say, "must a man be converted when he is already good enough?"

Certainly not. If he is as good as conversion can make him, he may go to heaven on that ground; there is no jealousy in the matter. If you can *deserve* heaven, God is perfectly willing that you should do so.

If any of you can go to Him and say truly, "Lord, I've always loved thee with all my heart, and strength, and mind, and my neighbour as myself—need I be converted? Can't I go to heaven as I am?" God will answer—

"Yes, certainly, you are like the angels, and need no conversion or redemption."

Now, I would like to see *all in this congregation who feel as though they could honestly say this to God, rise up where they are. I would like to count them.* What! not one? Is there not *one* in this great congregation who dare make such a plea? Then you have no plea that will stand you for a moment.

Suppose that some provision for all your past sins could be made, and you started to-morrow morning to begin life anew. You say to Pride, "Now, Pride, you're not going to be master any more. I am going to be master now; I'll hold you in; I'll tread on you." And you go forth, and return at night lamenting thus—"Pride has overcome me, and ran away with me; it has dashed me almost to atoms; I cannot stand at all against its diabolical power."

Then you say to your other passions, "Lie down, I *will* be master;" and they rise up and roar at you; they wrestle with and cast you down; they rend and worry you, leaving you nigh to death. *Then* you begin to see *what* you are, and *where* you are, and you bemoan yourself thus—"I never was half so bad as this till I tried to grow better. I had not a thought of the strength of the evil nature in me; I *cannot* reform. Oh wretched man that I am! *who* shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Now* you are in the right place to hear that Jesus Christ will deliver you. His power can convert you, and will do it if you are in earnest in asking. And then *He* will take care of your sins; all you will have to do will be to forget them. Go heartily to work for Him; work for Him in your own heart, for you will always find plenty to do there; and work for Him in the world, in your business, your studies, your pleasures, your *whole* life, work for Him. Your most radical and central ideas must be Godward, before you will be headed right, and sailing heavenward. Beware! if a slow match be placed by the magazine, you may heap the building with gardens full of flowers, but they will not save you from being blown sky-high when the fire reaches the powder.

Oh! men! men! men! struck through with the rottenness of sin, come out of the darkness, escape for your lives. Ye young, come to the light, come to joy, come to immortal life.

If all unkind and unjust words were arrows, like needles and pins; and if, instead of piercing the ear, and then the heart, they flew against the bodies of those to whom they were directed, the children in some men's families would be like pincushions, stuck completely full of sharp and painful weapons.

The command of Christ to take up the cross has been signally and widely misunderstood. The Christian life presents so broad a front, that all views blend in it. *This* is but *one*. They err who would make it *the* characteristic of religion.

Deny thyself, and take thy cross; but still be not seeking for burdens. If the Lord says to thee, "Go forward," *go*, though the next step be over a precipice five hundred feet deep, where far below you trees look like grass. The air may become solid beneath your feet; but if not, *go forward* where duty calls, and *the end* shall be peace and life; but

don't be ever feeling as if the burden of the Lord was heavy, and to be borne with groans, and bent frame, and sighings—or that you must turn from life's pleasures, merely because they *are* pleasures, and it would be denying yourself to forsake them.

Christianity asks no such sacrifices. She gives *fullness* to the joys of life, saying only, Walk in the love and fear of God; rejoice freely in all life's pure pleasures, but murmur not if God see fit to take them from you. Be patient when the trial comes, but be not seeking poverty of any earthly delight.

Not such jesuitical notions are those of Christianity. Men are not called upon to empty themselves of the loves of earth, and to become ghostly and ghastly despisers of its warmth and beauty. They are called to bring all that is natural within them, given of God in the beginning, and have it sanctified; then love shall tell them where to take up the cross, and where to deny themselves; and soon there will be only strength in the cross, and choice in the self-denial; for as the higher faculties grow and rise, the lower will cause less and less pain in submitting. They will mind quickly at the first start of their superiors, and what *was* sore self-denial will be so no longer.

THE time when Christians will be no longer called to poverty and hardness, to narrowness and commonness of outward life, is coming. We are on the edges of it, and therefore I speak to warn you to consecrate your prosperity and your pleasures to the Lord. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; and all that is rich, and tasteful, and beautiful, He will give into the hands of His own children. The devil has stolen the wealth and beauty of this world; but he cannot retain it. All that taste and riches can command is yet to be bestowed upon the Church; when she shall have become so pure that she can stand blameless, generous, honest, and humble, in prosperity and luxury. Christians have yet to learn—and they *will* learn it—the lesson of humility and godliness in the midst of riches. They will learn how to walk aright, not in sackcloth, but in velvet; how to be not only steadfast under affliction, but under blessing. They will be able to endure not only hardness, but what is far more dangerous, *softness*—and will be able to bear not only defeat and baffling, but *victory*.

I WISH that I could see a right sort of prayer-meeting. We have better prayer-meetings here than they do in many places; but I have heard in this lecture-room prayers that I don't think went higher than the ceiling, and talks that had no life in them, said simply because you had come to say something, and thought that was about the right thing to say.

Now, if I could hear a man standing up in his place, say—

"I'm cross at home. I trouble my wife. I am harsh and ungentle to my children. I don't represent to them at all the character of God. Indeed, I'm afraid if God were presented to them as their *father*, that they would be more inclined to run away from Him than if they viewed Him solely as a judge. My brethren, I don't want to be such a wicked Christian. I am sorry and sad because I am such. Can you tell me how to improve?"

Or—"Brethren, I'm stingy—dreadful stingy and harsh. I do give sometimes; but it comes very hard. I want to get as much work out of everybody as I can for the least pay. I try to be prudent by getting good bargains out of other people. When I can buy a good garment at half-price, or when I can get a day's work out of a poor person for half a day's wages, I generally do it. Can any of you show me how to get a generous heart?"

Or—"I'm growing rich, and I feel the swellings of vanity and self-importance already beginning in my heart. Can you tell me how to keep humble, and to glorify God in what I keep for myself, as well as in what I give away?"

Then I should say we are having a genuine work of grace in our meeting. My people, we must make our religion fit *our* times, *our* dispositions, and *our* wants, and not try to torture ourselves into the shapes of ancient times. The first Christians were forced to apply religion chiefly to supporting themselves under losses, privations, and persecutions; but we need to apply it more in other directions. Our tempers, our households, our business, our political duties, our pecuniary circumstances, must all be guided by religion, or we are faithless in our generation.

THE world is God's journal, wherein He writes His thoughts, and traces His tastes. The world overflows with beauty. Beauty should no more be called trivial, since it is the thought of God. Through beauty things become useful. It is a religious duty for a man, so far as honestly he can, to surround His children with creations of taste and beauty,

that their finer instincts may be cultured and gratified. The love of beauty is the gift of God, and it is born in the heart of every child.

I DON'T know which is most lovely and admirable—a poor and devoted saint at the very gate of starvation, who is full of love and grace, and who is ever doing good; or a rich and lifted-up saint, with not a want that need go ungratified, who is yet as pure and humble, as self-denying and generous as though he had never known wealth. But the latter needs most grace to keep him.

MANY good people think it wrong to indulge in a taste for the fine arts. They are even much exercised by conscience for wearing expensive clothing. They lay off broadcloth and silks, and dress in linsey-woolsey; but they may then still retrench and retrench, that they may have more for the poor: for this principle, carried out, would lead back to barbarism. It is not the right one. Every man should do his part for the poor, *and his heart should enlarge as his means increase;* but he who can earn them has a right to refinement for himself and for his children.

Men have got to learn how to unite the elegances of high polish and luxury with self-denying humility and generosity; they have got to learn how to revel amid the delights of music, poetry, and painting, and not be hurt by any or all of these, before the millennium will be fully established: for God's children are to walk amid all the good and beautiful things of the earth, and be holy there. No man has any business to be unrefined, or neglectful of the cultivation of taste. By the love of nature; by music, and poetry, and painting; by flowers; and by the neatness and elegance of household appliances, grossness will be destroyed. It is a mark of a sinking nature to be indifferent to everything but food, clothing, and shelter. Beauty in the house, beauty on the person, beauty all around, should be a man's aim; and every home should resound with melody, and be bright with the results of genius and taste—thus will be the homes of the latter day.

It is more worthy of a Christian man to take gladly and gratefully all these delights, and to learn to carry himself aright in the use of them, than it is to refuse them all, and go, stinted and starved of beauty, through the world.

Accustom your children to the elegances, refinements, and

beauties of life, while at the same time you train them robustly in the exercise of all that is good within them. Thus they shall grow up around you elegant, refined, beautiful, and as *agreeably*, as they are *thoroughly*, good; which will be a *very great* advantage that they will have over some of the good people of the present day, who are the most disagreeable people on earth.

Clothes and manners don't make the man; but when he *is* made, they improve his appearance.

THE sweetest and most generous natures are the ones in greatest danger of becoming soured through the ingratitude of the world.

THE family is the first, and by far the most important, institution in the world. It is the true Church—the best expounder of the truths of Christianity. It is from the family that the only real idea of the relationship between God and man can be obtained; for God is more a father than He is a king, or a judge, and thus men should be taught to regard Him. Paternity is the strangest of life's mysteries, and the most solemn men come here to watch that the priest teach his Church right things. Look at home, father priest, mother priest: *your* Church is a hundredfold heavier responsibility than mine can be. Your priesthood is from God's own hands; and it is a solemn thing to have God lay His hands upon you in paternity—to give you a Church from your own loins. You should all condemn the man who should rush with haste and levity into the ministry; but not half so worthy of condemnation would he be, as they are who enter thoughtlessly, led but by fancy and youthful inclination, into the marriage state, and are constituted priests of the family. They are the formers of immortal characters as no other priests can ever be. Let them look well to *how* they form them.

Children are not given primarily for your love, or for your amusement, though incidentally they are for these; nor are they given for a staff for your old age, though they shall be this also, if you are the wise support of their youth; but they are given for your education, and to become, like you, independent beings.

You are not to consider them as burdens, or to repine that you are wearing out your life for them; but you are to guide them carefully—to instruct them fully in the path

by which they are to journey when they may no longer cling to your hand. Teach them so that when you leave them to go on alone, they may know how to steer for the safe heaven. If you do your duty faithfully, you will reap your reward as you go along; if you fail, *bitter* will be your punishment; for no keener suffering can be known on earth, than that which the heart of a parent bleeds under when the hand that administers it is the hand of his own child.

A man who has never had the care nor felt the love of little children, who has not been taught self-denial by his desire for their good, is, so far forth, not a perfect man.

I do not say that the discipline must of necessity come through children of his own blood; but he must be taught of childhood, or he is for ever unfinished.

For a poisoned heart there is nothing in the world so poisonous as men. It is not *well* to see *too much* of men.

I can conceive of a state of public sentiment and morals, in which there might properly be free utterance of truths which, in the present state of society, a minister has not a right to express.

The people could not understand or bear them now, and to speak them out would be to touch morality, and to cause great evil. This, in the days of Christ and His apostles, was the case in regard to many truths which it is now the leading duty of His ministers to proclaim boldly. As the ages pass, the circumstances of men change, and truth must be brought to bear on men as they can bear it. Premature developments work mischief. This principle both Christ and His disciples fully recognized, and *many yet* are the secret truths of God. The future will unfold them as they are needed.

When sick of humanity, away to the desert, the forest, or the ocean shore; there is balm in nature for the wounded and weary heart; healing is in all her low uttered voices.

Men who were to treat their social affections as we treat our religious ones, would be regarded as fools—and with reason. While we are busied with the pressing affairs of life, we *cannot* feel the glow of religious affection—nor is it expected. If, when the pauses of business come (not when we pause from exhaustion, but in the leisure hours), our soul

gladly returns unto its love; or if, when in the hurry of work and trade, a question of *principle* comes up, our thoughts glance quickly God-ward, *and we decide as in His presence*, we need not fear that we are in a cold, backsliding state, though we be, indeed, *very* diligent in business. To have the fear of the Lord always before one, it is *not* necessary that one should be always directly thinking of Him, or of spiritual things. This is impossible in those pauses of daily life, where it is our *duty* to concentrate thought upon secular concerns. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," has been perverted to mean that it was unchristian for a man ever to give his whole attention to money-making.

Now, the whole attention of a man must be given to study during study hours, or he will never make a scholar; and it must be equally given to business during business hours, or he will never succeed in the proper support of his family, or the Gospel. When the work and the strain is over, *then* the soul of the Christian will consciously rejoice in the Lord.

What if I, on awaking, were to say—"Now I will love my family with all my heart—nothing shall, this day, interfere with my love for them," and were then to go into a furious fervour about it, embracing and kissing them, and declaring my affection for them. I might *try* to work, with my mind so hotly fixed on them, but I could not do it. I should soon say—"I can't hunt up these texts, I can't write these sermons; they require my whole attention, and that is not justice to my wife and children; they turn away my thoughts and affections from my family—I will no longer try to work at them." I then impatiently toss books and papers aside, and devoting myself to the declarative form of love for my family, forget all else. How much good should I do them under such circumstances? The true way to prove my love for them is, to devote myself steadily to some way of supporting them. Then, at the season of relaxation from work, I shall be sure to enjoy them and their love.

Just so in spiritual matters; for the family is the best teacher of theology. The men who walk in lonely places, thinking only of God and the angels, are not the most reliable Christians, are not the bone and sinew of the Church. This has been proved throughout the ages.

Any such thought of the things unseen and eternal, as shall unfit a man for his daily secular duties, or teach him to despise them, is *wrong* thought, and should be discarded. Religion underlies all things. It is intended to fit a man

for *life*—to teach him how to carry himself in his business, his pleasures, and his pains, as much as to aid him when he dies. It was not meant to lift him out of, or beyond, the common work or wants of life, *until life is passed.*

I WOULD pave hell with doubts; yea, I would so fill and choke it up with doubts that it could contain nothing else, could I by that undo the reality of it, and necessity for it.

THE frozen ship which, last week, came struggling towards New York harbour, is a figure of man's soul before grace enters it.

Look at her condition! Her ropes and rigging encased in shining ice; her men mailed in ice—ice in their hair, ice on their beards, their feet and legs clad in the frozen mail, the gauntlets on their hands heavy and stiff with the same cold armour, and their hearts freezing in them from long struggling and despair. The pumps must be worked incessantly, to keep the ice-loaded ship afloat; but the strokes fall slower and slower, for the life is congealing in the arms of the hopeless mariners.

Hark! a hail. See! a pilot-boat is near. Another moment, and the pilot is on board.

"Give me the helm," he says to the worn-out man at the wheel. "I know just where you are, and will get you safe into port in a few hours."

The men find themselves suddenly endowed with new powers of motion. They rush about the decks, obeying the pilot's orders. They pull at the ropes; they rattle the icy shrouds, they make the crust fly from the tackling. Up the slippery ratlines they climb; they dash from the frozen rigging masses which before they could not move. The cordage creaks and groans, and its shivered mail rattles down upon the decks; sails are reefed and unreefed, they hoist this sheet, and take in that, all with the same stiff and frozen hands and limbs which, an hour before, were yielding to the torpor of death.

Cheerfulness is on all faces, hope in every heart. They have got a pilot. He will guide them into port. Their lives are saved.

The soul is that ice-bound vessel; its unrenewed powers are those ice-clad, helpless men. Grace is the pilot, whose coming renews the life and hope of all.

And grace alone can encourage one who has once seen

himself to be in the wretched condition which has been described. Grace can strengthen and cheer; it can guide the soul into the safe haven. Without it there is no true life—only frost and ice, and hopeless and heavy gloom, ending in eternal death.

Hours are like sponges—they wipe out good resolutions.

No man ever becomes a Christian by beginning with his outward life. Reformation is not religion; though it often precedes, and always accompanies it. He who is constantly labouring to reform his conduct, and to square his life by the rules of morality while his heart is not right with God, has all the burden and cross of religion, but none of its peace.

And he will never gain much upon the work he is trying to do; for, if the very faults from which he has for a time escaped do not overtake him, others, perhaps worse, will, as long as the principle within him remains unchanged. He may, with strong hand and iron will, curb the outgoings of pride and passion in some old direction, but they will find new courses. There is no curing effects until causes are reached.

Camping down upon the edges of a sin from which a man has just escaped, is dangerous work. A person in such a position is like one who, upon finding himself in the running current of a river which is rising, swollen by heavy rains, struggles desperately until he reaches its banks, and there settles himself in false security. In the morning, the waters of the freshet are booming about him, and he flies to the meadow, a little higher. But the floods are out, and they rise and rise, faster than he can run, and the man who, by fleeing at once *to the mountains* when he came up from the river, would have been saved, by tarrying upon the lowlands, perishes.

Never was there such a contrast in a conversation as that presented in the conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria. Christ speaking from the top of all spiritual apprehension, the woman from the bottom of sensuous knowledge.

In the higher sense, there is no right action without right motive, and the only right motive is, *love to God.*

You may spend your whole life picking off your old dried leaves and dead branches, but if, in the centre springs of your soul, you are not subdued to God, your work, although rewarded in this life, as all morality is, will not be accepted in heaven.

I have seen a gardener at work upon a tree which had a worm gnawing into it at the point where the root and the trunk united. The earth hid the worm, and so, when the leaves withered, the owner went and picked them off, and washed the tree with the various things that he had heard recommended for diseased trees.

When the branches began to perish he hewed them off, and he worked and worked all summer at that tree, but it died. Now, had the gardener called for a spade, and removed the earth about the roots, *and killed that worm*, he might have given himself no further trouble about the withered leaves or the dying branches. There would have been no more of them.

THE reason why inquirers cannot find the peace for which they seek, is because there is self-will hiding somewhere out of sight; like the mainspring of a watch, which cannot be seen, and which yet is the very life of motion in the watch, self-will is the ruling power in every sinner's heart. It lurks in such darkness that the man himself cannot always see it. But often he knows very well where it is snugged away; and when conviction comes upon him, when he longs to be religious and at peace, he goes with a candle into every place where this rebel is not, to hunt him out, and make him surrender to God. Into all the chambers of his soul he goes with his candle. He sees how sinful he is in them, and he freely opens them to God's cleansing. He *never* set much store by anything in these rooms; but there is a dark, close closet in the mansion, from which the sinner keeps carefully away. He don't thrust his candle in *there*, and say to the thing that cowers within, "There you are; come out and be made captive." Oh, no! This is the worm at the core; and you may go on with your hard working out your salvation till you die; and if you do not unearth him, you will land in perdition.

This enemy will lurk in a closet only while he is hunted for. A culprit is hid in a house; the officers come to seek for him; the master of the mansion shows them hither and thither, bids them open this door, and that; go up garret,

and down cellar, and be satisfied. But when they pass a panel in which there is a secret spring, he says not a word about it; and it remains untouched.

The officers are satisfied that the man they seek is not there, and they depart. When the door shuts behind them, the panel opens, and a face is seen at the window watching them away.

Now the culprit is out. He walks about the parlours, the halls, the chambers, just as he was wont, until there is a sound as of returning footsteps; when he instantly vanishes behind the closing panel.

Thus difficult to discover is the hiding-place of self-will. When once that principle *is* reached and grasped, the whole man can be easily guided. He *is* guided whithersoever that subtile principle wills that he should go.

Look at that stately ship. What a mighty hull she has —three hundred feet long; her masts a hundred feet high. How well set is her rigging, how clearly defined her spars. We may see her distinctly, but not *all*. Away down under the water, hiding at the ship's stern, there is a little plank that is of more importance than all that so proudly towers on the breast of the billows.

Neither hull, nor decks, nor main-mast, nor mizen-mast, nor bowsprit, nor yards, nor sails, would be of any use without that plank down under water. Suppose that some person, ignorant of this fact, should attempt to guide that ship's course. He would say, in despair, after wearing himself out with fruitless efforts, "What *does* ail this ship? I have pulled at her bows; I have furled and unfurled her sails; I have tugged at every rope in her, but she will not keep her course. I cannot manage her. She will do nothing right. What can it mean?"

Now, suppose an old salt should say, "Have you tried the wheel?"

"Wheel?" says the man, "what wheel? No; I've tried no wheel."

"Lay hold here, my hearty," cries the sailor. The landsman grasps the wheel, and the little plank below turns two inches, and the ship, though she be ten times as large, and ten times as heavily laden, moves submissively round to the strength of one man's hand.

Now you may tug at your topmasts, or toil at your bows, and you will *die* with your course all wrong. You never will head for the safe harbour till you take your stand at the wheel.

NEVER think that God is going to make a Christian out of you without effort of your own. When the lion crouches down before you, and his eyes glare upon you, and he is about to spring, you need not expect Providence to fire your gun for you; you must do it yourself or die. 'Tis kill or be killed with you then. God has already done His part in the work of your salvation. If you don't choose to do your part, you will perish.

THE moralist says, "It has cost me severe labour to be as good as I am; how shall I ever be able to do greater things than these?" Friend, there is a rock which on one side is supported by the solid earth, on another side by other rocks, on a third by trees, but upon the fourth side it has no support, and it requires there but a few pounds' weight to tip it downward.

Now you may go and destroy yourself in efforts to remove that rock, and only imbed it deeper in the earth, or fasten it more firmly in the trees or among other rocks; but, push it *in the right direction*, and it is no longer there. I tell you it would not be half so hard to be a great deal better Christian, than to be the moralist you are. You are all the time pushing the rock the wrong way. Do you say, "Well, it is the most earnest desire of my life to become a Christian. What lack I yet? What is in the way?" I cannot tell—I might tell, in particular cases, but not generally. But, 'tis a question that each one can answer for himself, if he *is sincere* in wishing to know.

God will answer all prayer for help in such cases, when it is patiently and honestly continued.

THE law is a battery which protects all that is behind it, but sweeps with destruction all that is before. Repenting toward the law is repenting toward destruction, but repenting toward God is repenting toward life and peace.

We count it marvellous that Christ bore our sins a few hours for us. Ah! God bore them long before—He bears them yet. The agony upon the cross was but one outshining upon us of His unutterable pity and love. 'Tis not at cold, bloodless, senseless law that we strike by sin; but straight home upon the throbbing, yearning, heart of God, our Father.

The world has an ugly way of forgiving. It *can* forgive; but as to *forgetting*, that's quite another thing; and it must

give the offender its mind. It sets him down before the blowpipe of its indignation, and scorches him through and through. Now, that is not the way that God forgives—He runs to meet a penitent while he is yet a great way off. *Runs* is the figure—not waits, not walks—*runs*, and He don't tell the trembling sinner what He thinks of him; He don't excoriate, bruise, and taunt, as the world does, till the penitent wishes a hundred times that he never had repented; but, as He himself declares, He forgives with no upbraiding; and the transgressions of the sinner shall not be even *mentioned* to him, or *remembered* against him, any more.

THERE are sitting before me, in this congregation, now, two hundred men who stuff their Sundays full of what they call religion, and then go out on Mondays to catch their brothers by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest; it's Monday now, and you needn't think that because we sat crying together yesterday over our Saviour's sufferings and love, that I'm going to let you off from that debt, if it *does* ruin you to pay it now."

BAD men may keep up long, but when once they fall, they cannot rise again. They are like apples I have seen hanging from a tree, round and fair as they could be, but also inside as rotten as they could be. As long as they could swing upon their stem they did well enough, but when they had fallen and smashed upon the ground, I never heard of their being made good apples of afterwards.

A MAN who makes calculation and provision for this life only, is like a sea-captain who, starting on a voyage to Europe, lays in provisions sufficient to last him only until he gets safe past the lighthouse, and out into the open sea.

THERE are some men's souls that are so thin, so almost destitute of what is the true idea of *soul*, that were not the guardian angels so keen-sighted, they would altogether overlook them.

MEN are differently built. There are men who are broad and strong at the base, in the middle, and up until you reach the moral faculties. These are shrunken in, and almost vanished.

Such men are like lighthouses, built well at the bottom,

and all the way up. All right, *only* they have no lantern, and no light. And the two things, the man and the house, are equally valuable.

Fear, in its normal action, leads towards hope. In its place it is good; but when you find that it leads to despondency, be sure that 'tis out of its place, and acting morbidly. Water is good to float timber, but a water-logged tree will certainly sink. Don't allow yourself to be water-logged by fear or anxiety.

Each one is at liberty to fashion God so that his thought can clasp Him; else there can be no *love* to God. Make Him to suit your want, and you will have gratitude and love to Him.

Some people, when they think of God, have a vague idea of greatness; and when they pray they pray into nothing, hoping that, perchance, some good angel will gather up their prayers, and bear them into the Divine presence.

All truth is equilibrated. Pushing any truth out very far, you are met by a counter truth. A man generally runs one truth out till he meets another, and then he drops his first truth, and goes over to its counter. By and by he swings back and gains his true position, that of a hub in a wheel, with all truth pointing towards him, and meeting where he stands.

The truth of a man's freedom, carried to a certain extent, is met by his dependence upon, and action according to, the will of God. The truth of a man's individuality meets, at a certain point, the truth of his sociality of being. These things are all true, and to be *right*, a man must be *on both sides.*

The idea of right living seems to be, with some men, *not doing anything wrong;* as if righteousness consisted in negatives. "Why," says the man charged with being a sinner worthy of death—"why, I never hurt anybody in my life; I never committed a sin in my life—that is, you know, a *real* sin. You don't mean that I should be shut out of heaven were I now to die."

Perhaps the man puts great restraint upon himself, and is really at a great deal of trouble not to do wrong. He keeps himself shut in very closely, even more so than many a real

Christian does; but if he be not right at the spring of life, he is on the way to eternal ruin just as surely as is the thief or murderer, though on a different charge, and though he is, as far as this world goes, a far better man.

But what shipowners would justify the captain who should say to them, upon returning from some foreign land, "Here is your ship in the same order as when I took her. I have not harmed her, nor used her for unlawful or piratical purposes. *She is empty, to be sure;* I have done no business for you; but here is that which is yours."

God has sent men out upon the sea of time. They are freighted as no ship ever was. Do you think that He will exonerate them if they dare to go up before Him with a plea like that just urged? Our talents must be improved, that at His coming He may receive His own with usury.

It is a man's duty to bring the influence of love to God to bear on every faculty of his soul, that it may be educated and expanded thereby. A man should live in every part of himself, and not be confined to one, two, or six apartments. The world calls a man made or ruined when he has made or lost—what? Wife, children, character, honour, reason? Oh no—not these; but *money! That's* the thing in which the world makes "the life" of man to consist. Ships are made in various compartments, each air and water-tight, so that when a rock dashes through the bows of the hull, the good ship does not sink, because there are enough other compartments to buoy her up till she gets where she can be overhauled for repairs; but men who have naturally the means of outfloating all the storms and all the leakages of life, allow most of their compartments to become ruinous for want of use and care. And then, when into the one, or perhaps two or three compartments where they do live, bursts the sunken reef, they are foundered at once. The waters dash in upon them, and they are gone—sunk like a bullet in the sea.

And for this they will be brought into judgment. No man has any right to live in his animal nature, or in his affections, in his tastes and sentiments, in his reason and intellect, or even in his moral nature, to the undue depression of the rest of himself. He should open his whole house, and let light stream into and gleam from the windows of every apartment. Ye who live otherwise are dead while you live. But Christ can give you life. Come unto Him.

Make it clear that Christ on earth, with His fathomless

love, His unutterable pity, His divine gentleness, and quick and tender notice of all appeals from the humble and poor, was different in *kind*, from what He *is* in heaven—prove that He acted from design, more than from the impulse of character, and that now the *tenderness* of that strange love and pity is no more, and you take away my Lord, and I know not where ye have laid Him. You have robbed me of my God. But now I look upon the story of His acts on earth, when He was, in some sort, fettered by flesh, and the laws which are the masters of flesh, and I say, "If His pity, and His patience, and His love, were such as this while here, what *must they be* now, in their full expansion?"

Christ came to die for our sins; but He came also to show us *what is the character of God*—to teach us, by lessons that we can understand, *what sort of disposition* He has who made us; and now, instead of wishing to go back 1800 years, in order to sit at His feet in Jerusalem, let us rejoice that every year brings us nearer to the hour when we shall go, not to Jesus hampered by fleshly laws, and shrouded as lights are from the eyes of the sick—but to our Saviour glorified and waiting to welcome His children and his brothers to their long-sought home.

I would have loved to listen to my Saviour as He taught upon the plains, or on the mountains, or in the cities of Judea; I would have loved to sit at His feet, to watch His looks as He uttered the blessed words that are recorded; I would have loved to speak with Him, face to face—to have seen His smile—to have touched His hands; but, thank God! I can do *better* than that—I can have Him, and can hold Him in my heart of hearts, as that sweet Friend and Comforter, who could not come down to earth till the *man* Christ Jesus was received up into heaven. By love I am conjoined to Him, and I feel His soul touch my soul. Thus I can abide with Him until I see Him face to face in heaven.

It seems a hard thing to realize, that so great and high a being, and one so holy as God is, should trouble Himself at all about man—a worm—one of these little angling worms that crawls out of his earthly hole, and suns himself a moment, and then crawls in again. But if even the hairs of our heads are all numbered—if He takes notice of *hair*, than which nothing seems more worthless, 'tis a lifeless thing that we cut and throw away—a mere appendage, the *fringe of*

a man—what notice must God take of *our living hearts*—our thoughts, which are but the souls of things! We can no longer believe that thoughts and hearts are a matter of small moment to Him who made us. He knows us each one by name, by disposition, by character, and He loved us before we were born. Now, when He asks us to love and trust in Him, He only asks what we know perfectly well *how* to do—what, ever since we were born, we have been doing, only not towards *Him*. Didn't we love our mother? Was it *hard* to love her? Don't we trust our friends? Is it hard to trust them?

But where is there mother, or father, or friend, like God? And *do* you say, "It is hard to love and trust in Him?" Or do you say, "*I* believe in fore-ordination, and am waiting 'God's time?'"

Fore-ordination! that is a shameful sham. God's time is "now," He never has any other time. Fore-ordination is nothing for you to meddle with, any more in religious than in money-making matters. In each it is in equal force, but 'tis God's business, not yours. If you *will* meddle with it, you deserve to get befogged and puzzled, though there's nothing against, but everything for you in it. But let it alone, if it troubles you.

What farmer, when the sun runs high, and the earth is ready for the seed, and the small rain and the dew are coming on the earth, says—"I believe in fore-ordination; I shall not take the trouble to plant. If I'm to have a harvest, I *shall* have one."

Or what merchant, when he goes to his store in the morning, says—"If I'm to have a good large heap of money in my till to-night, I *shall* have it there. No need for me to trouble myself to please customers; I believe in fore-ordination."

Men are not fools enough for this in temporal concerns, though plenty of them are so in regard to the interests of their immortal souls. No, when they see God working for them *in nature*, they take hold, with a right good-will, and work too. And, as a general thing, they gain the blessing for which they strive. In other words, they do, in these minor matters, "work with God," to will and to do of His own good pleasure; but when it comes to spiritual work, they hold quickly back, and exclaim: "Oh! fore-ordination!" But this will be no plea for them, when they come forth from their graves, and when, from mountain and valley, and

from the dark waves of the sea, they lift up their blanched faces to their Judge. Of all the myriads who will stand before Him, there will not be *one* who will have a word to say—they will be "speechless." For *five dollars* a man will appeal to a higher court. He will go from court to court, sooner than lose "*his rights.*" He will have new trials, if such a thing can be accomplished, and spend three times the sum for which he is contending, sooner than he will submit to be *wronged* out of it. Men do not suffer injustice tamely; but here, where *all* that is of value to the never-dying soul is at stake—here, just upon the edge of the everlasting and most dreadful woe—here, where, if there was *one* single consideration which would tell for them, they would be most patiently and gladly heard, there will not be found one—not one—who shall have the assurance to utter a single syllable.

So clear will be to them the utter folly and wilfulness of their self-ruin, that when sentence is pronounced, they will turn in dead silence from the face of Him who sought them all their lives, and veiling their faces, they will take the plunge, from which He *could not* save them. There will be but one expression and one wail through all that endless falling, and that will be, "Soul, thou hast destroyed thyself."

THERE are men who will not seek for religion when no one else is seeking, because they don't want to be thought singular—shame working through the organ of approbativeness; and then, when a revival comes, they won't seek it, because they don't want to get excited, and go with a crowd—shame working through self-esteem; and thus, between those two guards, warding them off from the door of salvation, the poor fools perish.

BECOMING a Christian is not becoming better than one's neighbour; it is becoming better than one's self. It has no reference whatever to other people. No one need to feel, when his neighbour becomes a Christian, "That man has set up to be better than we are now; we will therefore watch him, and see how his saintship gets along."

The language of a man standing here to enter the Church is not, as many suppose, "I have become so good that I think it will do for me to join myself to Christians." Far from it; his language is, "I have come to see that I am so wicked, and so helpless, that I cannot stand alone. I am not fit to stand out in the world. I shall certainly perish there. O

brethren! I have got my eyes open to my danger and my sin; I have had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His love and pity for me. I am touched with love for Him. I would be fashioned by Him; but I dare not stand alone. If you can help me, if there is any safety among you which in the world I do not know, for the love of God receive me, and hold me up, until I am able to sustain myself."

There are men who come into this Church who are a great deal worse, in many respects, than some others whom I would not vote to admit as members, simply because the first I believe to be Christians, and the latter not.

Suppose five brothers went West to farms, bought here: when they got there, one found his farm to be a swamp; another found his to be full of stumps and rocks, with a poor soil when he got at it; another found his rather better, but still poor enough; a fourth found his good land, but uncleared; while the fifth had a farm on the rolling prairie, with a rich, dark soil that only needed seed to yield abundantly.

At the end of a year, the man who owned the marsh has, by great effort, and unremitting industry, got his land drained, manured, and a few acres of it under cultivation; the second has progressed a little farther, though with less labour; the third, still farther; the fourth has, with one quarter the pains and expense of the first, got four times as much done; while the fields of the fifth are laden with a rich harvest. He is making money the first year. One, judging from appearances of the merits of these farmers, might say the man who owns the fifth farm is the best farmer. I tell you, nay. *He* is the man for work and for courage, who has struggled through the disadvantages of that first farm, and has made it *begin* to bear fruit.

There are some men who are born of a good stock; they have well-balanced minds, good natural dispositions, and are educated in the very hot-beds of piety. When such are converted, there can be but little change in their conduct. The springs and motives of life are touched, and what before was done as unto man, or from a mere sense of duty or propriety, now flows from love to God. Men look at such persons and say, "Well, they *ought* to go into the Church; they will be an honour to it." But when the poor, crooked, crabbed, ill-conditioned, ill-constructed sinner, who is so bad that it needs a whole conversion for every faculty in him; who is possessed not only of seven devils, but of seven devils for every one of his powers, comes humbly, saying, "The love of

Christ has touched even *my* heart, oh help me to grow into His image, receive even me unto His table," men say, "Away with him! He'll be no credit to the Church."

Now, when such a man really does get his own consent to be a Christian, and sets resolutely about it, he has to *work* for it. He *does* have "a work to do." It takes not one quarter of the religion to make perfect saints of men who by nature have almost everything done for them, that it does to render this other one even decent.

Emphatically, "The first *shall* be last, and the last first."

THERE are men who dread religion, because they think it circumscribes them.

Doubtless the life of a mere *professor* of religion *is* a life of circumscription; but to one who has the love of God within him, there is freedom such as no other man can know.

What is there of pleasure or of joy, that is worthy of a man, that *I* may not have?

Is the air less free, the earth less beautiful to me, because I am a child of God, and can rejoice in my sonship to Him who created all things?

Is *love* less to me, because I know and feel that it is to last for ever?

Are social pleasures less keenly relished, or friendship less valued by me, because I know that they will be eternal, and are to brighten for ever beneath the smile of my God?

I tell you there is no man that has half the right to the things *that now are*, that *he* has who by faith and love has laid hold upon the things which are to come. To a Christian, earth is both substance and shadow. It is, in its better joys, a hint of the perfect joys to come. It is a glass into which one may look and see reflections of eternity. It is an utter impossibility to have any true and continuous satisfaction in life, unless you do feel that you have the love of the Giver of Life—unless you love Him. If that consciousness is yours, though you be shorn of all other joys, *that* will sustain you; but the probability is, that all other joys will grow firm, founded upon that one; for ours are not the days when religion arrayed all earthly power against men!

MANY a man, awakening to a sense of his wickedness and trying to do better, finds himself so much worse, that he cries out in terror of himself.

If any of you who are unconverted doubt of your need

of the help of Christ to curb your sins, just try for a few days to do it alone! They will give you work of it. You'll say you never were so bad before. You never *were* so universally in rebellion. While your will goes with your selfish or evil desires there is no conflict, or none that makes much stir and dust. I don't know as water would ever make any noise if it were allowed to flow unobstructed; but put rocks in its way, let logs stick up in the current, dam it up, or in any way obstruct it, and then see—such a noise, such a commotion, such a determined overflowing as it makes; and it *will* get out somewhere. So with yourselves—as long as your heart is let to flow undisturbedly hellward, there may be but little trouble—you may hardly be conscious that you are a rebel at all; but lay on the bands, mark out the bounds, hold in the lines—and what then? Why, then you will see how desperate is your case, and will soon discover that there is none but the Son of God that can help you. Then do not be afraid to go to Him because you fear you can't hold out; take the first step, and He'll help you; when you fail and fall, He'll always forgive you; if you are strong, and *never give over* trying to work *with* Him *against* your besetting sins, He has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

O friends, bound with me to the judgment, put not this matter aside! I feel that I could plead with you till the sun goes down, my heart is so in it. Talk not, I beseech you, as you go from here, of the speaker, the gestures, or the striking passages—talk of the passages that *struck*, or go thinking silently of what is to come to every one of you. Let the sun go down, and when it is set we will pursue the subject, and may God direct His own word and truth to the salvation of souls.

If there is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repents, I don't know what the angels will do now that men everywhere are taking the kingdom of heaven by force.*

How marvellous is that part of the nature of God that permits Him, while Himself so pure and holy, to take tenderly to His bosom, and comfort with His love, creatures so full of sin as we are. Sinners unregenerated are perplexed by the joy and courage of Christians, who cannot but be conscious that they are yet very imperfect, sinful beings. They do not see how we dare to trust in Christ while we yet do wrong. If we did no wrong, we should have no further need of Christ. Believing on Him is not instantaneous cure from

* March, 1858.

sin; it is release from the curse and bondage of it, and surety that the cure is coming. Christians are like men with some disease upon them, who have faith in the physician that has engaged to heal them, and they lend themselves with earnestness to the work of getting well. Relapses grieve them, but do not discourage. They rise up as often as they fall down. They groan and long to be delivered from the burden of death which is upon them, and they know that deliverance will come.

Sinners, until awakened, don't know that they are burdened. They are like sick men with no shelter, no physician, no nurse, growing worse and worse for ever. When they *are* awakened, their first thought and effort is to try to get *worthy* to come to Christ. Could they do that, which none ever can do, they would not *need* Him. The point at which a man comes to see that he is utterly evil and helpless, and consequently turns to Christ as his *only* hope and help, *is the point at which conversion takes place.* On one side of this point a man is a sinner without hope; on the other side *he is a Christian.* A sinner still, to be sure; but with a certainty of healing, rescue, and salvation.

Men take the world, filled, *stuffed* as it is with all good and beautiful things, very much as gipsies would take some glorious mansion, furnished with rare taste, and adorned with masterpieces of art. The chief room they would attempt to occupy would be the kitchen, and they would take the treasures of manuscripts, in which were written wonderful secrets of invention and science, and the solutions of great mysteries, to kindle the fire under their dinner pot. They would like the pictures, because they had oil in them and would burn the faster. Thus blind to the higher uses of the things of the world are men. And it is the way of God never to stir one step from His path to show them better. He has given them the faculty to find out, and there He leaves them. In the physical economy of the world there is provision for all physical wants; but they lie for the most part hidden. Not till the earth is scarified and rent, forced open and bored into, does she disclose or yield her treasures. Near acres of wheat men may starve; by the side of forests and beds of fuel they may freeze. God will not move one inch or one finger to save man if he will not, with what He has already done for him, save himself. So in the spiritual world, provision for all men is plenteously made; but they will be allowed to perish unless they come and appropriate it.

All things are to be had for the taking; nothing without.

Let no man *dare* to think, "God, the gentle and merciful, will save me, whether I come to His terms or not." The whole analogy of life is against the thought. God will not save you, body or soul, except in appointed ways. It is turn, or die.

Unutterably dreadful is the thought of eternal death. Eternal! It is absolutely suffocating. I have felt my whole nature revolt against the horror of the conception; and I *would have* disbelieved it if I could. But no! it is true—it is an awful truth, and the mentions of it in the Bible are not so much threats as merciful disclosures of what lies at the end of the sinner's course, that he may be induced to flee for refuge to the hope set before him. Even if the passages regarding hell could be made to mean something else, it would not unsettle my faith in this doctrine. It would never be enough for me to take these passages of the eternal Word, and, placing them in the rack, wrench and torture them until I made the poor words shriek forth some other meaning, unless I could see that the Lord, who is dominant over the natural as well as the spiritual world, turned aside in that for the sake of helping those who in *natural* things will not "come" to what He has appointed for help and healing.

The ages have rolled and rolled, and through them all the sound of the earth's groaning has gone up to God, and He has never stirred. Man *must* avail himself of what has been done for him, *or he must die.* God has done *all* that He will ever do in the matter of providing means for salvation. The rest is left to man.

No man has any business to try to be a Christian secretly. The light of love is not one for him to hide under a bushel. And, usually, a man's first duty after conversion is to make the fact known to the very persons from whom he most wishes to keep it.

I think no sufficient reason has ever yet been given for the great reserve felt by us toward those persons who are most dear to us. We shrink more from saying to our parents, wives, husbands, and children, the things that lie deepest, than to any one else in the world. Why this should be so it is not easy to understand.

I can very well understand how and why a man hates to say to his business partner, with whom he has long been engaged in cheating people,—"I have become a Christian."

I know that it *must* make him twinge, and feel *particularly* uncomfortable to stand up and own this, and have his partner say, "Ah! well, how is it to be now about those profits that we have hitherto shared between us? Those *extra* profits—profits that we got *in those ways, you know.* Am I to have them all now?"

I can imagine how a liquor-dealer would feel to own his conversion, and to hear, "Well, what are you going to do? —going to join the Church?"

"Yes, if they'll have me."

"Going to set up family prayer?"

"Yes, I shall pray in my family."

"Well, what *else* are you going to do?"

"Why, I shall try to do my duty."

"Yes, *but about the liquor,* I mean?"

No doubt all this comes hard. But these things have got to be met and dealt with. If a man is noble he will say, "Not only will I put out my eye if it offends me, but I will put out both eyes; for I have got two eyes opened in my soul that are worth more to see with than forty* bodily eyes."

Sins against society—which is money—are felt to be very sinful, by those who have the money and who mean to keep it. Strike the side of a bee-hive, and see how the bees will swarm out, and buzz and buzz to defend themselves. Go on to Wall Street or Broadway with any indulgences for financial sins, and there will be equal buzzing there. *Crimes* are owned to be sins indeed, because they touch the *material* interests of men, or hurt their affections—their selfishness; but when you pronounce men sinful in the higher, spiritual sense, they cannot feel anything about it. There are greater sins and smaller sins, it is true; but *all* that is not of faith and love is sin. Jonathan as truly broke the law of his father the king, by tasting the honey on the end of his rod, as if he had slaughtered an ox and partaken of its flesh. As long as a man commits no *crime,* he don't feel himself condemned, though his spiritual nature be dumb, dead, petrified.

There are seasons peculiarly fitted for becoming a Chris-

* "Forty" and "five hundred" are Mr. Beecher's favourite and most frequently mentioned numbers. He seems to have exempted them from his general dislike to figures.

tian. There are no feelings or sentiments of which the soul is capable but what have their tides. They ebb and flow like the sea. This seems to be one of the laws of our nature.

There are times when the popular tide sets towards religion; when all outward circumstances, as well as all inward yearnings, conspire to invite and even press the sinner towards God.

Some persons object to revivals, saying, "We don't believe in feeling and impulse. We think religion too serious a matter to be entered upon hastily. We think it requires calm consideration."

Well, you man, twenty, thirty, forty years old; you with the gray hairs fast covering you, *how much longer* do you wish to consider? Remember that Death sometimes strikes without much consideration. What if he strike you? Where will your calm thoughts be then?

Truly, 'tis a wise piece of business for a man, hanging by no more than a single hair over the bottomless pit, to say to the friend who throws him a stout rope, "Wait, I must consider calmly of this—I don't believe in being in a hurry." There are some cases where consideration is crime—where deliberation is death. Unutterable fools! that think, and think, and *only* think, upon the borders of perdition. The sands beneath their feet are crumbling and shifting away; but they must think, they say, when one calls to them to run. And so they pause, and perish.

Feelings *ought* to be regarded; sympathetic emotion is good for hearts. As much so in *religion* as elsewhere.

Resist not the Spirit when your heart is tender and your thoughts turn in you and lift themselves up towards God.

What shall we do to be saved? this is now the daily utterance of men's voices. Believe on Christ—drop instantly and for ever all known sins—all meannesses, all dishonesties, all unkindnesses, at home and everywhere, all wrong thoughts and evil imaginations. You never can go in at "the strait gate" with any of these clinging to your will.

Do you cry out, "I cannot do this; the work is too hard for me; if I quit my sins they won't quit me; I cannot say to passion, avarice, selfishness, pride, 'Lie down and move no more;' I *cannot* think right, and act right; I *am not able* to enter the gate if *this* is the way?" If you think thus, how comes it that you have been putting off this matter of re-

pentance to a sick-bed, or to old age? If you cannot reform your thoughts and disposition *now*, how can you then? You say truly, you *cannot* reform them, and for this cause you need a Saviour. But you *can* remove them, and turn from them, and consecrate your whole body and soul to Him, and *He* will reform you by aiding all your efforts. He will forgive as often as you break down, if you carry a steadfast purpose to conquer *self*, for the sake of His love. He will not fail you, if you are sincere in seeking Him; but He will abhor your offering if you do not mean to make clean work with yourself by laying open your whole heart and life to His influence.

"Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" but *not because of any trouble in the gate*, or in the Lord that stands at the head of the way, but because they try to carry in their barrels of spirits, or their selfishness, or their vile and evil dispositions and habits. Such can never enter. No rich man can go through that gate carrying with him his usury, or his exorbitant rents, wrung from sweating and groaning tenants. No unjust judge can go through with his oppressions. But there never was, and never will be, a naked, trembling soul, sincerely sorry for sin, and heartily desirous of escaping from its power, and to be made white in the blood of sprinkling, for which there is not *abundant* room. And yet "many *shall* seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Many are the secret sins of heart and life whose clinging shall prevent the sinner.

Ships, when the tide rises and sets strongly in any direction, sometimes turn and seem as if they would go out upon it. But they only head that way, and move from side to side, swaying and swinging without moving on at all. There *seems* to be nothing to hinder them from sailing and floating out to sea; but there *is* something.

Down under the water a great anchor lies buried in the mud. The ship cannot escape. The *anchor* holds her. And thus are men holden, by the cords of their own sins. They go about trying to discover some way to be forgiven, and yet keep good friends with the devils that are in them. And this they call "being serious." It is almost all self-will fighting against the Spirit of God. Now, let men be honest with themselves, and if they think their sins, any or all of them, are better than the love of God and the salvation of their souls, why, stick to them, that is all, and give up thinking; but if they feel that the redemption of the soul *is*

precious, and that it ceaseth *for ever*, let them abandon all that hinders it, and begin at once to work with God for their own salvation. What they *can* do they *must* do, or be lost, and that is, stop all wrong-doing that they can stop; what they *can't*, Christ will attend to, reforming their interior dispositions by the love which He will shed abroad in their souls. Turn ye, turn ye, for why *will* ye die? Now is the accepted time—all things now are ready. The Lord has brought you nigh unto Him, and on every side of you men are hastening to make their peace with God. Beware how you let this opportunity pass. You may not have another. What would you say when some great steamer had run aground where there was but one tide in a year that would float her, if, upon the day before that tide came, her officers got together for a council, and decided that as there was but one tide a year, and they didn't believe in taking advantage of extraordinary times, that they should make no effort to get the ship off. When the tide rose, surging and booming about the ship, if they had got up steam and set all sail, and worked her giant wheels, grating, groaning, and reluctant, she might have moved and struggled off into deep soundings. But they let the flood-tide pass; and the water sank away from the ship's keel, and she cracked and parted asunder.

Anon the beautiful and mighty ship was floating, but it was plank by plank, and spar by spar.

What, I ask, would you think of those officers?

But what is a ship when compared to a human soul; which, being created, is to go step by step with God throughout eternity; for ever rising in purity and love, or for ever sinking into the blackness of darkness?

When you and I, my hearers, stand in the fore-front of the judgment ranks to hear our doom, when all above us and around us is the glory and the brightness of the Holy City, and all beneath us is the blackness of despair, you will not accuse me of exaggeration in saying to you that there are none so unwise, so blind, so miserably foolish and desperate, as those who, for *any* cause, do not *first* attend to the safety of their own souls. With all my power I warn you; with all my strength I entreat you; with all my skill I will aid you. Oh! seek ye the Lord while He may be found.

I OFTEN find, in talking with people, that they are in a state amounting to, or which ought to amount to, conver-

sion. They see and feel their sinfulness and need of Christ; they are prepared to cut off limbs, or pluck out eyes, in His service. They tell me with tears that they have moments of great affectional yearning towards Him: and yet they don't "go off." They are waiting to get something more, although they don't exactly know what, aboard. When I go and talk with them, they seem all right; but I leave them, and they stand still. I find them in the same spot day after day. Now, there's no use in my going to talk with such people. They must get themselves to work; they must begin to *do* something as well as *feel* so much. Let them enter upon the Christian life at once; perform every known duty, stop every known sin.

Here is a clock; the works are all right, the hands point to the right time, and 'tis all properly wound up. Everything is in prime order, and ready to go. But it *don't* go. What is the matter? You look at it an hour hence, and the hands have not stirred. You move them forward, and leave it, and the next hour you have got to set them again. This sort of work you may keep at for ever. As long as the pendulum is not moved, the clock won't go. Let *that* begin to tick, and all is at once right and busy. Now, let those persons who are all wound up just begin to tick. Start your pendulum, and the trouble is over.

THERE are many persons, and I find them chiefly women, who do not experience any deep throes or trouble in entering the right way.

Their conviction of sin is not such as catches them and plunges them headlong into agonies and horrors of great darkness; but they look on Christ, and love Him, and at once accept Him. They have a *real*, but not particularly powerful knowledge, that they are lost without Him. They are conscious that they are poor and sinful, very much as a little child is conscious that he is ignorant, and they go to Jesus for riches and righteousness, very much as the child goes to school for learning. The child has faint ideas of how utter is his ignorance; but after he begins to learn, he sees it more and more. These penitents are but faintly aware how deep is their sinfulness until they have begun to see as God sees, which is not for some time after He has blessed them with His adoption. Often the fact that there was so little struggle in their conversion has caused them to doubt its genuineness; and so they have got into great darkness; but

they must remember, that God leads men to Him in ways best suited to their own natures and dispositions, and while they who are naturally passionate and wilful, who have more strength than tenderness in their dispositions, are often seized and rent like him out of whom went the furious devil, and are left wallowing upon the earth before they will look to their Saviour, those who are of a gentle and loving disposition, whose will has been trained to submission, and who have lived chiefly in their higher nature all their days, will not, they *ought* not to, find it hard to come to Jesus Christ, to put their arms about His neck, and tell Him, with gushing love, that they give themselves, body and soul, into His keeping.

Blessed are they who can look upon the Saviour, and so instantly feel His goodness and beauty, and be so penetrated by His wonderful love, that, with hardly a thought of self, they run to Him, and offer Him themselves. This is the highest form of conversion. Conviction will be sure to be felt by such hearts as these every time the thought of what it is to grieve such a Saviour touches them. And the longer they live, the worse will their own sins, and all sins, look to them. Let no one then, who has enough conviction to honestly desire to forsake sin, and to understand that in Christ lies *all* his help, wait for more, or for a deeper feeling. If the wind is blowing two knots an hour, don't wait till it blows ten knots before you start your ship. If there's enough wind to start on, *start*—be off. If you want to come to Christ, *come*, don't wait *for anything*. If you can't feel as bad as you want to, don't stop on that account. When you've learned to love God, you'll feel more than you can ever imagine now.

When serious persons ask me what to read, I am accustomed to say: "There is a little old book called Matthew's Gospel, which I think would suit your case. And there are three others which are just as good,—Mark, Luke, and John."

Don't go to the side helps of commentaries until after conversion. I think that commentaries for inquirers are like the spider webs of fifty years over windows, for sight. You must brush them all away before you can see clearly. No book in the wide world has been so be-webbed as the Bible. Commentaries are very well for those who need helps in dates, or in sacred history; but let the awakened sinner go straight to the fountain-head of truth—the Bible.

And is the reading all? Oh no, read *praying*. And here again is where there are many and deplorable mistakes made. The inquirer and the young convert try to pray too long and not often enough. They try praying as they have always heard the deacon and the minister pray, or as their father does; and then they get into great distress because their "thoughts wander." That is *the best thing about* it. When they attempt to do what for them is as impossible as for a lisping babe to converse like a philosopher, their thoughts *will*, and ought to wander. If this were otherwise, they would but the better play the hypocrite before God by praying things for which they don't and can't feel the need, and in cold set forms of chilling reverence. Now we have a model for the prayers of beginners, and 'tis this: "God be merciful to me a sinner." You *can* feel all of that; you see it begins abruptly; and it ends when the man is done.

No "O thou mighty, mysterious, and everlasting Lord." No "For ever and ever, Amen!" about *that*.

Let it be a lesson to you, beginner. Pray what you feel, and *not one word more*.

Read on; and if you are perplexed, and your thoughts look up, say, "Lord, I can't understand this. I pray thee help me." Then stop, *if you are done*.

Read on; and if a scene, or an action, or saying of your Saviour touches the fount of feeling, let that feeling out, saying freely, "Dear Lord, I love Thee, for Thou truly *art* worthy!"

And so on through His whole recorded life, and through your own life. Be instant in prayer. Warm, true, impulsive, and affectionate in communion with your God.

The utterances of real feeling only are acceptable to Him. Forced prayer, or insincerity in prayer, is like foul odour in His nostrils,

It is enough that He is willing to forgive us our sins, and to excuse the imperfections of our earnest prayers; let us spare Him *mockery* added to sin.

If we can't feel like praying for everybody and for everything, or like praying when we think we ought to pray, and if we are sorry that we feel so dull and prayerless, let us say *that* to God, and keep silence till we can feel more. God's heart is like our hearts—like a parent's heart. Our hearts are made by the pattern of His.

How would a man like to have his own children observe only set times of coming to converse with him? Coming

from a sense of duty at that? How would he like to have them arrange all that they have to say in set and studied forms—very respectful, perhaps, very laudatory, very humble and devout, but *very* heartless?

Think you that what would cut you to the heart, coming from your own offspring, does not at all hurt Him whose tenderness is the ocean out of which your *drop* is drawn?

When I was in Paris, I used to rise early and sit at my open window. I always knew when the stores beneath me were open; for one was a flower store, and from its numberless roses, and heaps of mignonette, arose such sweet, *sweet* fragrance, that it proclaimed what was done. It seems to me that Christians should be as a flower store, and that the odour of sanctity should betray them wherever they are. Not that they should go about obtruding themselves and their actions on others, with the *cant* of usefulness, but that they should live the purity and joy of religion, so that men might see the desirableness of it, both for the sake of nobleness, and for the enjoyment both of this world and that which is to come.

Conviction comes upon men in a thousand different ways; sometimes a little child climbs upon his father's knee, and says, looking up earnestly, "Pa, why don't you pray?" I tell you, there's many a man would rather a pistol were snapped in his face, than to hear that question from a little child.

Do you say, "I want to be a Christian, but I'm waiting to be convicted of sin: it isn't right for me to do anything till I've felt myself to be a sinner?" then to you I am sent to say, you have no right to wait for *anything*. Begin this instant to love God, and to act like a Christian.

"But I *can't*," you say.

Ah! have you come to that knowledge already? That is conviction of helplessness in the direction of goodness. Just go earnestly and perseveringly to work to act right and to think right, and you'll get conviction enough.

You may stand still and wait for it, looking into your own heart to see what you are, *for ever*, and not get it; but just try living right, by the rules Christ gives, and it will come upon you, so that you shall cry out, "God be merciful, and *help* me, for there is no good thing in me."

It's everybody's duty to begin *at once* to live like a Christian; and when they find how they fail of all they want to do, they will be convicted; and when they give themselves utterly into the hands of Christ, they will be converted: that *is* conversion. It won't be *becoming perfect*, but it is the *first step* towards perfection. You must always keep trying to be good, just as hard as if you had all to do for yourself; but you must no more be discouraged by failures than if you had nothing to do; for you have *always*, night and day, an Advocate with the Father—one who is righteous, though you are not—and who will *never* leave nor forsake those who trust in Him. Therefore come boldly to Him, asking for grace to help in all times of need, and *knowing* that, though you fall, you shall rise again.

Some people seem to make a merit of great anxiety for their friends. Now there is no merit, and no use, and there is positive harm, in more anxiety for them than will excite you to do all that you can to influence them aright. When that is done, and you have committed them to God, then go away, and *feel happy* about them.

We are a singing Church, and when we are dead, and men come and scrape the moss from our graves, they will say, "These were Christians who sang much."

You are planting seeds for the future as you sing these hymns. Were you to go away to Oregon next year, this book, out of which we have all sung together, would be a hundred books to you; how it would make you remember these morning meetings, these lectures, these Sabbaths.

While Brother —— was praying,* the words, "Come up hither," came to me. As I wondered what it meant, instantly it opened up to me in this way:—

Suppose that I had gone away from here for years, and came back to find my daughter living in some low, obscure place, bound out to hard labour for people who took no notice of her; or, worse, noticed her only to abuse her. Suppose my son were in another place, half clothed, half fed, and suffering all manner of ill treatment. And thus with all my children.

What should I be likely to do? Should I not at once set

* In a prayer meeting.

about lifting them out of such situations? and getting them up where I was. I should say to them—

"Come up, my children; you were not born to live down there. Your place is where I am. Come up here to me; here is where you belong."

Well, this is what God is doing to men. He has a few, a very few, children living in the high places of spiritual life—those regions of hope and love where He himself dwells.

But most of His earthly family dwell far below, and He is constantly coming down to seek for them.

He looks in the region of awe and reverence, in the region of conscience, in that of despondency and fear; yes, He even goes down cellar after them, and sometimes can't find them even there. But wherever He does find them, He says to them—

"Come up hither—come up into the region of warmth and love, where your Father dwells. You were not made to live down there. This is where you belong. Come up hither."

We must not settle down indolently to wait for God to make fruit grow in us. He never does anything for us in regard to character without our co-operation. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, not servile fear, or abject trembling, but with such eagerness as men often feel in an engrossing work they are so eager about that their nerves quiver a little. It is in doing our duties, and bearing our trials and vexations, that Christ is with us, and will dwell in us for our comfort; but He will not dwell in us in any such way as that we shall have no more trouble and pain in struggling with our passions, our failings, our avarice, our pride, and all our besetting sins. It is by fighting and overcoming these that we get to be fruitful. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure." These things God put together, and no man ought to put them asunder. As you climb difficult hills your prospects will be brighter and clearer; but not until you have gained the highest peak of experience will you be able to see, from horizon to horizon, the presence with you of God; and then you will soon begin to descend; for it is generally not until near death that the Christian gets a view like this.

THE great truth which God is driving through our times, as with a chariot of fire, is *the importance of man!* When this truth comes up to the Church, does she welcome it? No! oh *no*—she cannot attend to new-comers; she is busy in the smoke-house of theology, dusting the flitches of old truth which have hung there for ages.

A GRAND mistake of the old reasoners in their arguing for the goodness of God, was that they tried to prove that in the world there is more evidence of design for happiness than there is of design for pain.

Now that position cannot be maintained. There is just as much evidence of a design to produce pain as to produce pleasure.

For every adaptation for pleasure that you will show me, I will undertake to show you one for pain. This life is clearly rudimentary. Men are here to be hammered into something of worth in the next state of existence. Pleasure is to be desired or expected but as incidental. Earth is not the place for *pleasure*. It is the place where men are fashioned for eternity. A piano factory is not the place to go to in order to hear music. Suppose a man were to start for some great piano manufactory, with the expectation of being enchanted when there by innumerable Thalbergs.

He goes along dreaming of the divine harmonies which will greet him when he approaches the place where these sweet-toned instruments are made.

He anticipates as much more of delight than Thalberg had given him, as there are more instruments in the factory than were on the boards of the concert hall.

"I am going to the place where all those pianos are made," he says, as he hastens on. "They turn out hundreds of them in a day. Oh! how will all sweet, bewildering sounds entrance my senses when I draw near. Hymns and songs of never-wearying melody will leap out at me from every door and window."

He comes in sight of the building, and instead of hymns and choral melodies, he hears harsh noises. There are heavy poundings, gratings, sawings, and raspings. There are legs, uncouth and clumsy, to be worked into proper size and gracefulness. There are strings to be tried, and separate parts to be fitted and knocked together; there are great heavy packing boxes to be made, and various other awkward and noisy work to be done.

Tools are thumping about; cords and tackling rattling; plenty of confounding noises, but *no music.*

The man stands and sees the workmen ply the hammer, and saw, and file, and punch, and chisel, and auger; he sees dust, boards, and shavings flying in all directions. Clatter and clatter surround him.

From the windows come broken bits of board, wire, and iron; also all the different notes of racket and din; but he hears no sweet melody.

Then the man says in astonishment, "Do they call *this* a piano manufactory—this confused place, full of all jangling noises? No, no; this is no piano producing establishment. This is only a dusty and noisy workshop."

Yes, it *is* a workshop, where are being fashioned the instruments which, when touched by skilful fingers, have power to enchant the world.

But it is not the platform on which they are to be played. Not *there* are they to give forth their sweet harmonies.

We are in the workshop of humanity. We see evidences of this, turn which way we will.

Evidences are numerous of a design of *pounding* us. We must feel the mallet and the saw, the punch and the bore. We must be split, and ground, and worked smooth. The pumice and the sand-paper are for us also, as well as for the things we fashion; and *at last*, when we are all set together, polished, and attuned, we shall be played upon by the music waking influences of heaven.

Fighting faults is the most discouraging thing in the world. When corn reaches a certain height, no more weeds can grow among it. The corn overshadows and grows them down. Let men fill themselves full of good things. Let them make their love, and purity, and kindness to grow up like corn, that every evil and noxious thing within them may be overshadowed and die.

Men are not put into this world to be everlastingly fiddled on by the fingers of joy.

Those persons who do most good are least conscious of it. The man who has but a single virtue or charity is very much like the hen that has but one chicken. *That solitary chicken* calls forth an amount of clucking and scratching that a whole brood seldom causes.

Sometimes, when mists conceal the bed of a river in which work is to be done, or which is to be forded, men are placed in the tops of trees along its banks, that they may look across, and sing out to those below, "Go on; you are in the right way. We see the other shore, though you cannot. March on." Thus has God put look-outs in the trees along the banks of the River of Death.

Not many—many are not needed; but in every Christian community there are some men who can see clear across the misty waters to the shores of heaven. God says to them, "Bear witness. Call cheerily out unto your brothers who cannot see for the fog through which they are walking. Tell them that all is right. Tell them not to flag or fear; that they are in the right way, and that the shore is not hard to gain, if only they *press on.*"

One such man in the tree will do for the encouragement of hundreds below in the river.

There was but one Moses to the thousands of Israelites that entered the Jordan.

Young Christian, do you want a prophecy of the future? I'll tell you how to get it. In the first place, let the future *alone,* then call to your heart, "Heart, art ready for each large or small duty of to-day?" If your heart answers as bells do him who strikes them, if it cry lustily, and with no tarrying, "Ready, aye ready!" and if this is, day by day, its sincere cry, you have your prophecy. You will not be troubled about dying when you *are* dying.

When Joseph sent for his father to come to Egypt, he sent men, and chariots, and horsemen, and provisions, all in profuse abundance. He didn't suppose that the old patriarch could journey with only his staff for company, finding himself by the way; and do you think that when God sends for you He will provide *less* bounteously for the journey to His home? No, no; when your work is ended, when your royal day has come, you shall have cause to cry out, in rapturous praise, "Sufficient! sufficient! sufficient! is the escort which Thou hast provided to bear me over to the Heavenly Land."

No man can go down the path of memory or experience into his own heart, and with the light of God's Word look into all its dark chambers, and hidden cavities, and slimy recesses, and not come up with a shudder and a chill, and an earnest cry to God for mercy.

WHERE Christianity is fruitful of speculations and barren of good conduct, infidels always abound.

IT is not death but life that we long for when we sigh to flee away and be at rest.

When we think of the grave, of the chill and ghastliness of death, we cannot say that we are so willing to try it; but when we *leap the grave*, sink the very memory of it, and land safe over in heaven, then, indeed, are we ready, aye longing to depart.

How skilfully does Paul sail past the two unpleasing points, without touching too hard on either: "It is not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon."

It is *not* desirable to be borne away alone, to lie and moulder in the cold, damp grave; but it *is* desirable, soon as may be, to enter heaven.

WHEN you can make an oak out of a mushroom, then, and not till then, you may hope to make a living tree out of that poisonous toadstool, the theatre.

It was, even among the heathen nations, considered a disgrace to be connected with one; and down through all the thousands of years which it has lived since then, it has come with perpetual dishonour on its head.

MEN say we *must* be honest; it is our *duty*. But they think there is no duty about being happy any more than about having fine weather. The weather is just as it happens, and so they suppose it is about happiness. But I tell you there is no more positive *command* in the Bible than this reiterated one. "*Rejoice* in the Lord alway; and *again* I say, *Rejoice*." And this rejoicing is not to be in pleasure and profit, in good prospects, or in sunny days, but "in the Lord,"—a joy that shall be independent of circumstances—a joy that men shall be obliged to confess must come of religion. A Christian is indeed allowed to rejoice where other men can; but he is bound to rejoice where other men *cannot*.

Who cannot rejoice when he holds his first-born to his breast? But, Christian, *you* are to rejoice when you bend, with falling tears, over his coffin. Weep! it is your right; but "rejoice in God."

Who cannot rejoice when he walks with his bride smiling beside him? But *you* are to rejoice when she lies stiffened in death on her bier.

Do you say it is impossible for you thus, at will, to banish sorrow, and recall joy?

It is *not* impossible. You cannot do it as you can will your eye to open or shut; but you can do it by controlling the causes of things.

You can live in such abiding consciousness of eternity, that time and the things thereof shall be to you but as pictures hung up in a hall, which may all be taken away without touching you.

When losses come upon you, you may and ought to sorrow for pain of present bereavement, but you should rejoice with a joy which no man may take from you, in the promise that all of yours which is worth having will be restored to you, where it will be dearer and better than ever.

Live so that your peace and joy shall be the "light" that shall shine on men, showing them the power of religion *thus*, rather than by seriousness, and gloom of face and temper.

You are not to follow after happiness as an end of life. So sure as you do this, you will *never* be happy. But be happy while you work with God. Ye are the temples of God. Be cheerful while you help your Master Builder to perfect His temple.

Under all discouragements, bear up cheerfully, remembering that it is by trouble that God puts temper into the steel. If it will not bear tempering, it is not worth much. He has promised, once for all, "I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee;" and has declared, "There hath not entered into thy heart the joys that are laid up for them that love me." What need we more?

What feeble and ungrateful wretches we are, not to be able to rejoice always, when we have such joys before us.

Much harm has been done by the idea that a certain gloom, and a restriction of the lively emotions, bear some relation to piety.

These bear the same relation to it that rust does to the sword-blade—*they eat into it.*

The command, "Be sober," does not mean, be unmirthful.

I would rather break stones on the road, were it not for the disgrace of working in a chain-gang, than to be one of those beings who are so rich that they have nothing to do but to "seek happiness," as they call it.

The "upper class," as they style themselves, are the *flies of humanity;* and if there could be some great fan invented to sweep them all out of the way, it would be a benefit to the world.

The working of such a fan would be a very good business for somebody.

And yet these beings presume to make society's laws. I must repeat, as the only true description of them that I know in the English language, Pope's lines—"If the gods be monkeys, what must the people be?"

WHAT does Paul mean in saying, "I am persecuted, but not forsaken?" It's a very pleasant thing, *sometimes*, to be persecuted, it's delicious! When a man has his own house, and his family around him, as much salary as he can spend, and more friends than he knows what to do with, it is a pleasant excitement, when breakfast is over, to open the papers, and look to see how he is "persecuted;" but this was not the way with Paul. He was driven out, and hunted up and down; he had neither father, mother, wife, sister, brother, nor constant companion, save his dark-browed jailor, yet he did not feel forsaken. He was troubled on every side, yet not distressed.

As a mailed warrior might stand amid flying darts from Indian bows, feeling them hurtling and rattling against helmet, and corselet, and shield, and falling about him like hail, until they were piled a thousand high, and yet smile, saying, "They hit me indeed; I am pelted and shot at of the archers, but I am not *hurt;*" so stood Paul in his armour of proof.

A man in the lists fights first with lance and spear; then, dropping these, he seeks in the closer contest, with the shorter dagger, to stab and kill. Then flinging this away, closes in the deadlier grapple. Then the two sway and bend, and topple to their fall, each struggling to overthrow his enemy, knowing well, that who goes *down* is *the dead man.*

They reel, they stumble, they fall, and at the overthrow one feels the knee of the conqueror on his breast, and sees the deadly steel shortened above his heart. Thus was it with Paul; yet there, lying prostrate in the dust, dying by cruel hands, he uttered his voice, and its triumphant joy comes ringing down the path of ages, to teach *us* how, in the loss of all things, to rejoice in God.

Ah! look not in the throne for strength.

The prisoner in the dungeon was mightier than the king.

He that was under the throne was stronger than he that sat upon it.

We are not to seek pain; but when it is sent to us we are not to fret and grumble at it, but try and go cheerfully along, as though we did not feel it. It is for our good, our purification—for nothing is so purifying as pain, if it be rightly borne.

Suppose I could have these faces gathered and brought to me, and could hold them thus, and should ask, "Whose image and superscription is stamped on this face?"

"Care marked this face," would be the (frequent) answer.

"Who marked this one?"

"Fretfulness."

"And this?"

"Selfishness."

"This?"

"Suffering stamped this."

"What this?"

"Lust! lust!"

"And this?"

"Self-will."

"And who stamped this face?" I should ask of one—a rare and sweet one.

"This! why, where did you get it? Whose face is this?—how beautiful! It is marked by the sweet peace of a contented spirit." I never saw more than a dozen of these in my life.

There are multitudes of men who are like summer vines. They lie along the ground, and reach out a thousand little hands to grasp the stronger shrubs, and if they cannot reach them, they lie upon the ground for ever hoof-trodden, dishevelled, and beaten of every storm.

I have heard people say, "What a fortunate circumstance it was that that trouble came to-day, just as I was so well prepared to meet it. I really don't think I could have borne it if it had come at some other time." Very true; you could not. God knew that, and He did not send it upon you until He had prepared you to bear it. It *was* fortunate for you that He thus cared for you; yet you speak as if its coming just at that time were all accidental.

H-h-h-h-m! what a fortunate thing it was for the tree that there *happened* to be a blossom just where the fruit wanted to grow; and what a fortunate thing it was that a bud *happened* to grow just where the blossom wanted to open!

It is a fortunate thing for my head that I've got a neck; and it is a very fine thing for my neck that I've got shoulders, and trunk, and limbs under it; and a fine thing for all these that I've got feet to move them all about upon. I don't know what I should have done if things had not *happened* to come just as they did.

These things do not come one whit more along the line of sequences than did your strength made equal to your day.

That was God's promise fulfilled, and you refused to see it. Your privilege is to be troubled about *nothing*. "Work well *to-day;* there all your duty lies."

Don't imagine trouble; don't borrow it; don't *die* before your time. When God wants you to die, He will show you how to do it easy.

You come to church to be *told how* to be the saint; you go out into the world to *be* it.

New England is the right arm of the States, and Boston is the hand of that arm.

That arm is now outstretched, and that mighty hand is clenched to give a death-blow to slavery. I never felt so willing to drop my oars as now.

Who would *row* when he could go by *sailing?*

Here is a letter from a Southern slaveholder, a woman, who has written to me—*me!*—for advice as to how to get rid of the slaves in a way which shall make them free, and not utterly impoverish herself.

When Southern slaveholders write to me on such a subject as this, then I say it is not hard for us to believe that the millennium *is* drawing nigh.

There is a question in the air that no set of men, be they of what sect they may, can steer quite clear of in their talk.

This question is sizzling everywhere. Hush it up, cover it down as you please, it *will* keep bursting out. 'Tis bubbling up on all sides of you. You *must* agitate it.

God is in this thing doing what I have all along prayed that He would do—viz., working in a way that will make all parties feel that the thing is not of man.

He has overturned the plans both of agitators and of quietists; but still He is putting on the spurs. He is forcing men to agitate the matter; and until they do it, He will agitate *them*.

Order and quiet are good things, when they can be had without the sacrifice of things that are better. But who says, when he looks upon the splendid marble buildings that adorn our cities, that all the noise, dust, and rubbish which obstructed the side-walks, while those buildings were rising, had better not have been made, even though the price of unbroken neatness and order had been the perpetual continuance of the old rat-riddled shanties, which were once where those palaces now stand?

To have God and the things of eternity consciously always in mind is impossible.

There is no provision, either in nature or grace, for such a state of things.

But to have Him in our hearts, as the governing power of our lives, and to carry our love for Him, consciously and unconsciously, as the mother carries the love of her first-born child, is what is our privilege and our duty to do, and our only safety. The mother thinks of ten thousand things which for the time *must* crowd her babe out of her mind; but never does she get free of the influence that her love for him has over her. We must make these natural loves our teachers of how we are to be filled with the love of God. We may go up by them till we are far far above them in regard to what we feel for Him who has all loves in Himself; but we never need to attempt impossibilities, for He will have no such worship. Remember grace is only *nature blossomed out;* it is no new thing grafted in upon nature, but nature won and warmed into its *true* growth; that for which the God of nature made it. A Christian is one brought back to true growing. Educate your children aright, inure them to hardness. Make them to be like the willow tree, that, when broken from the parent stem, they may immediately root themselves wherever they strike ground, and bravely flourish on their own responsibility, instead of being for ever grafting themselves on your old trunk and limbs. Don't make women of your sons; for thus would they have all woman's weakness, without her regal excellence.

A woman *made of a woman* is God's noblest work; but a woman made of *a man* is His meanest one.

There is no religion in the Bible—I hope if there are any reporters here, that they will wait until I finish my sentence before they run to the —— paper—any more than there is a road upon the guide-board. The Bible is the rule, the direction, by which man is to work out his own salvation, as the guide-board is the direction by which he is to walk out his journey. Religion is *in the man*, or it is not anywhere.

Religion should not be used as calking—something to stuff into the cracks and crevices of a man's life; but it should be regarded and used as the very warp and woof of life.

When all goes smoothly, men imagine themselves fully equal to driving their own team; but when their affairs begin to run away with them, they cry out quick enough, "Where's God? where's God?"

It ought to grow more and more easy to Christians to do right, until at least the acts that *were* sore self-denial become a pleasure.

When this has come to pass do not be frightened, and begin to doubt your piety. Be glad and grateful, for your graces are growing ripe.

What was once sour and bitter has become sweet and agreeable.

When you first entered the Christian path, you found it hard to do those things as conscience commanded, and you were often tempted to cry out, "Thy paths are *not* the paths of peace, O God!"

You were as children who, hearing their father discourse of the rare and luscious apples that his orchard yielded, straightway ran thither, expecting, though it was in the early summer, to be able to judge of the flavour of the fruit. Biting into it, they cry with wry features, spitting and casting the apples to the ground, "Is *this* the perfumed, saccharine flavour our father talks of? We want no more of it."

The miser, when converted, finds that he must be a miser no more. He sees, perhaps, that duty requires him to give fifty dollars to a poor man. He wishes that twenty-five would do; but it *won't* do. He knows that. He puts his hand into his pocket and—considers. He tries to go away without giving the sum.

"Do it—do it," growls conscience from within.

The man casts down the money hastily, and runs away.

That was a victory, but a hard and painful one; and the miser finds himself put through years of just such discipline, until at last he is a miser no more.

Giving has become a blessing and a *pleasure* to his heart. Shall he now say, dolefully, "I *fear* I am not a true Christian. I cannot see that I carry any cross, or deny myself any, as once I did. Why, I remember when it was like crucifixion to give away five dollars. But I overcame nature and gave it, and then I had sure evidence that the root of the matter was in me. But now—oh! I'm so much at ease now, something must certainly be wrong—nothing seems to try me."

Why, man, your graces are growing fully ripe. Or take another figure—

It is a great trick among the boys to ferule each other in order to harden their palms preparatory to blows thereon from the teacher.

It's a good thing sometimes to have the palms hardened. Yours have been hardened, so that giving does not hurt them now.

THERE are localities where the gnats, flies, and mosquitoes are so thick that a man cannot see for them. They swarm about his head and eyes in such blinding numbers that it is utterly in vain to try to seek for anything upon the ground.

Thus, I think, it is with the Bible. It has been so beswarmed by commentators that it is next to impossible to think of a text without instantly hearing the buzz, buzz, buzz of five hundred constructions and explanations, each one of which is farther from being any help than the others are.

Our real commentators are our strongest traits of character; and usually we come out of the Bible with such of its texts sticking to us as our idiosyncrasies attract.

The texts we least need are the ones we like best, and remember longest. A kind-hearted, *lazy* man will remember "Blessed are the merciful," long after he has forgotten the injunction to be "diligent in business."

Health underlies all there is of a man. I think a man ill-bodied cannot think healthily. It would surprise people to see how many things which have shaken the world with controversy, and burdened it with error, had their origin in indigestion. It is humbling, but it is true, that the action

of the mind depends upon the state of the sinews and the blood. To be sure, there have been cases in which, from a diseased body, the mind has shone out strong and good, triumphant over fleshly ill; but these are not the rule. No man would think of going into battle with a handful of unarmed men, because such have won victories; or of going to sea in an unrigged ship, because dismasted and dismantled vessels have come safely into port. Health is a duty. If a man would carry his mind aright, and have it work with *power*, let him seek to be healthy.

Christians all want to have graces, but they are not so willing to take what is necessary in order to obtain them. The pale think it a fine thing to be painted—all the lovely flowers and gay colours so skilfully laid on by the cunning hand of the artist; but when it comes to being daubed all over with some dark substance, when the very gold that is upon them becomes as black as ink, when they are thrust into the heated furnace, how then?—how *then?*

Christians are like vases, they must pass through the fire ere they can shine. And often the very furnace and the flame which they call destruction is only burning *in* the graces which are to be their everlasting beauty and glory.

Not so much is it *much* working, as it is *easy* working, which tells. If a man only knows how to use himself—if he use all his faculties in due measure—he will scarce ever tire. Most men use but very few of their faculties. They are like a man who owns a tower in which are thirty bells, but he never attends to them. By and by there comes a day on which he would rejoice, and he goes to ring his bells. He draws this rope and that, but there is no response, or only a jingle now and then from some cracked and rusty bell.

At last, from one great, hoarse throat, at the top of the tower, comes crashing out a heavy sound.

That bell is the only one of the whole thirty that will ring.

Or, men are like houses, *built* very high, but which the owner had no means of *furnishing* higher than the first storey —and there he lives, his upper chambers all going to rack and ruin. Or they are like ships well freighted and furnished when they started out from port, but which, when they near their other harbour, have nothing left of them but their hull. They have made fuel of everything within themselves. They are self-consumed.

A MAN's worth should be reckoned by what he is, not by what he has.

A WISE man is one that knows how to turn to good account the knowledge which he has. *He* is not wise who has mastered all languages, all sciences, if he lacks the ability to *use* this knowledge. *He is only stuffed.*

THE man who tries to cut himself and square his conduct merely by the outward pattern of morality, is as the artist who, instead of studying his art from the boundless and glorious pictures God has painted on the earth and in the sky, goes into some dim gallery, and pores over what hangs there until he can badly imitate the stiff drapery, uncouth figures, inhuman adults, and monstrous pumpkin-headed children, that the canvas before him exhibits. Ha! you love to laugh at the artists; but what do you think the angels do at *you*, who prostitute not merely your fingers and imaginations, but your whole spiritual nature, to the work of making, not bad pictures, but bad, incomplete, poverty-stricken men? "Is not morality good, as far as it goes?" say you. "Yes, certainly, *as far as it goes.*" "Isn't *my* cable as good as yours, as far as it goes?" says the sailor who has a short cable to him who has one very long. "Yes," says the other, "as far as it goes; but what of that, when it won't go within fifty fathoms of bottom?" And of what use, O moralist, is your cable, when it will not go within fifty fathoms of the place where it can take hold upon the soul's anchorage?

I DON'T blame a man for not understanding the mysteries of God, anymore than I should blame one who was standing in the Atlantic Ocean for saying, "I can't."

"Can't *what?*"

"I *cannot.*"

"Not what?"

"I've been in ankle-deep, and knee-deep, and thigh-deep; I've been in all over, and it's no use; I never can wade across the Atlantic Ocean."

"Of course you can't—nobody told you to. What did you try for? God never meant to have you do it, or He would have made it more shallow."

Just in this way do men act in regard to doctrines. They go out a little way on election, and back they come shaking

their heads and saying, "It's very mysterious; I can't understand it." Then they try free agency, then decrees, &c., but they have no better success with them. Well, what of it? Man, by all his searching, cannot find out God. I am not ashamed to say that I do not understand His mysteries. I believe that what He says is true, if I cannot reconcile it. My own consciousness agrees with the most seemingly contradictory passages concerning free-will and sovereignty. I know that I *am* free, that by my own choice I perform moral acts; that with me lies the power of sinning, or refraining from sin; and yet, when I go forth with my most buoyant sense of freedom to think and act, I am conscious of influences, of barriers, which say, "Thus far, and no farther."

I feel in my very nature that I am free, and yet that I do not direct my own steps, nor appoint my own bounds. I cannot reconcile this. I know it; and there it must rest.

God does us no violence. He uses us through the very nature which He gave to us, and through our free-will.

The mulberry leaves are stripped from the tree, and the food which they make for the worm, acts upon it according to its own nature. As their nature dictates, the worms spin their cocoons, and sleep in them.

Then, when the little spinners have been dispoiled, the loom is made, and the silk is woven and stamped by the skill of man. Every thing has been used, according to its nature, in the construction of the silk.

And the web which God is weaving, and the pattern with which He will mark it, will all be done in the same way.

The whole plan is in His mind now, and it will result as He intends, but only through the free action of the nature He has given to man. His plan embraced this idea from the very beginning of things, and every contingency is provided for in the eternal mind.

A *man* is better than a peer, a prince, or a king.

Some ministers are for ever hammering out doctrines, making ploughs which they do not work after they *are* made.

Now, *I* make ploughs; but when I have finished them, I don't lay them away to be taken out and rebeaten the next year.

No; my business is to put handles in my plough, and then to fasten to it a team strong as eternity, and then to

force it deep, deep into the soil, and rip, rip, rip, ousting the vermin, scattering the moles and nibbling mice, and making broad furrows, in which I may sow seed.

Doctrinal furrows are good for nothing unless they are planted, and doctrines should not be preached so high that they are above the head of everybody who walks on the ground.

EACH living man bears a relation to his whole race. His having lived will never cease to be felt throughout the universe. No man *can* live unto himself. We own each other, and God owns us all. A man never stands alone unrelated to anything; but his closest relation is always to his Creator.

A willow tree may stand far from the banks of the stream, and with no apparent support, except from the ground about its trunk. But what are its roots doing? Down burrowing amid the rocks—forcing a way through the earth, seeking for openings—pushing whithersoever is the smell of moist soil—diving to the level of the cool well, and drinking deep of its nourishing waters—shooting out by the brook-side, many, many rods away, till its banks are fringed like a shawl—seeking everywhere for the nutriment which gives life to the tree above them—is what the roots are doing; and man is like a tree, only *his* roots shoot upward, as well as downward, and his firmest tie is to the heart of God, as his surest and best supply is from thence.

Who then can say, "I am mine own; I stand alone, uninfluenced and uninfluencing?"

THERE is little hope of ever uniting men on doctrines or ordinances.

I think I can see in the New Testament, authority for Episcopacy, for Presbyterianism, and for Congregationalism. To me it seems, therefore, that the apostle's idea was, that the Churches should be governed according to their necessities, taking one form, or another, as was best suited to them.

The only ground on which all Christians can have perfect union, is the ground of *love*.

Why, a little while ago they gathered themselves together from the four corners of the earth, to form one great Christian union; and the very first thing they did, after they were assembled, was to disfranchise the whole band of

Quakers, among whom God has His saints and angels, if He has any on earth. May they not have been permitted to present to the world this absurd spectacle, for the purpose of showing the impossibility of Christians uniting on mere grounds of opinion? Love is the *only* fusing power in the universe—all *may* meet there.

Three naturalists once went into the woods to find a nightingale's nest. When they had found it, each took from his pocket his favourite work on ornithology, and began to describe the looks and the size of the nightingale that was not there. All gave a different description, and they quarrelled over the empty nest, and tore each other's books, and made a great noise. But now, from the thicket, where she had been resting, the bird began to pour a flood of song. The disputers stopped to listen. The very leaves quiver in the gush of melody; the waves of air are moved; the forest is bathed in music as in flood. When a hush falls around them, for the song is done, the men straightway shut their books, and go home.

Men read about God, and His character, and they try to think about it, and undertake to describe it, and finally they get to quarrelling about what none of them at all understand. But sometimes, when the truth shines out clearly on them, they forget all their supposed wisdom, and in silence go their ways to love and to adore.

Suppose that I knew a body of men conspicuous for their faith, hope, love, gentleness, generosity, &c., but before I gave them my confidence, I wanted to dig down a little deeper than practical life, and I said, "My dear sirs, what are your ideas concerning the Trinity?"

"Well," they reply, "we don't know much about that. In fact, we have no theory in regard to it."

I then question them in regard to the "perseverance of saints."

"We have all been so busy trying to persevere, that we haven't had time to study upon the doctrine," is the answer. And so on to the end of the doctrines.

Then in order to be orthodox, I should have to shake my head at them and say—

"You *may* escape into heaven, so as by fire; but I don't know, I don't know; I will pray for you."

"Sound doctrine," says Orthodoxy, "is the foundation of religion." No such thing; Jesus Christ is the foundation of

religion. Doctrine is the most delusive goblin that ever existed when it is in the hands of certain men. They frame a form for Truth, and when she has outgrown and forsaken that form, they stuff it with doctrine, and bid men cling to the old shell, and let the living spirit escape them.

I THINK that it is the sense of right and wrong that marks the line between man and the brutes. I'm sure I've seen some dogs that had more sense of right and wrong than some men have; and I think when you get down so low that this sense is wanting, you have to come to beings that are neither human nor accountable, be their form what it may. But at least it is dark and twilight exploring in this direction.

THE ministry is inclined to think that a truth has no chance at all with refined and educated men, unless it have a refined dress. Now, although it is true that such men do look for what shall accord with their delicate and elevated tastes, and although even the truth of God is better if presented in chaste and elegant language, there are always, in every man's heart, great cords underlying all these lighter desires, which will answer instantly and powerfully to the touches of *feeling*—even though it be rudely expressed. When a man overflows, and in his efforts to express himself knocks his language in all directions, his honest, earnest, outright, downright feeling is the power which moves. It would be mightier were it well expressed, but the *feeling* is the thing after all; and when a man holds back feeling until it chokes in the sand, that he may present a correct and refined discourse, he *betrays Christ to rhetoric.*

When Paul said he was determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, he was upon this same theme. He was telling the people that he was not going to tickle their ears with fine, smooth periods. He said—"My power upon you shall not be in my refined and elegant language, in my persuasive eloquence. It will not be in me *at all*, but in my moving subject, Christ and Him crucified." He was going to throw over them no lasso of ensnaring art; he would declare to them the plain truth in words that all could understand and feel. Paul meant no such thing as ministers mean now-a-days, when they make this declaration. *He* did not mean by it that he should shun all touching upon the things on which duty called him to speak out boldly, that he should meddle with nothing that could offend the

sinning public, but talk perpetually of Christ and Him crucified, without making this his lever to heave from their foundations the evils of the world. Such talk is nonsense, in the pulpit or out of it—consummate nonsense.

WERE angry and unkind words and thoughts like thunder and lightning, we should have one unending storm, sweeping round and round the whole earth.

WERE one to ask me in which direction I think man strongest, I should say, his capacity to hate.

I THINK that Scripture passages are like wayside flowers. We have seen them all our lives, and therefore do not know or feel their beauty. Or, they are like the beautiful creations of art that are in old cathedrals, covered by the dirt and moss of ages. Men go by them and do not know that they have passed forms that gave expression to the thoughts of ancient masters. No man cares for them, or cleans them, until by and by some enthusiastic Ruskin comes along and does it, and then 'tis seen that the things which all their life long they have thought homely, are beautiful beyond description.

What an idea of God's prodigality must have been in Paul's mind when he thus struggled to express himself:—"Unto Him who is able to do for you exceeding abundantly more than ye can ask or think." And *this* was his view of his Master's character when he was in prison, and when, apparently, affairs with the Church were desperate. This view he held up in the sky for Christians to steer by. Such abundance belonged to God, and God was theirs. Abundance is a relative word. A shepherd would not consider that abundance for him which might be so for a wayfarer. What would be abundance for a nomad would not do for the supply of the settled farmer; and the farmer's abundance would be a scant portion for the merchant. A petty prince of a German province would require far more than the abundance of the merchant to support his state; yet what would make his coronet resplendent would be but a trifle in that of the Russian czar. When from these we look up to heaven, and try to imagine what that can be which *Infinity* names abundance—"more than ye can ask or think"—we are bewildered, and give up in despair. In the hours when the Spirit wafts our souls upward as the wind sometimes lifts a bird, aiding

its flight, we wish, and think, and ask such things, as afterwards we wonder how we dared to mention; we cannot believe ourselves that we ever soared so high as we yet are conscious of having done. When the heart yearns for ourselves, or for others, we ask such blessings as we almost fear are presumptuous. But even a mother's heart, deep as the eternal wells, when in her closet she kneels amid the sound of groans, and the plashing of falling tears, to pray for her wandering child; even the prayers of martyrs, in their utmost agony, when their words sweep like the Amazon, and were yet but bubbles on the sea of feeling that was beneath, were shallow and poverty-struck compared to what He will give to each one who loves Him. Why, look at the beginning; when a child is sent to earth, what preparation of soft quilted fabric, of all delicate and curiously-wrought garments, scented with sweetest perfumes, is made for the little pilgrim of love! But what is all this to the expense and lavish outfit of earth, the cradle of man's infancy? See how its furniture is wrought. One fragrant bank, could he, in his whole lifetime, produce such a one, would render an artist immortal.

God has quilted the earth with beauty, and combed the hair of ten million flowers and reeds over its verdant banks. No emperor's child was ever rocked in such a cradle.

Does the mother lavish less love upon her child as it grows in stature and capacity? And shall God do less lovingly than those whose hearts He made and filled with love from His own heart?

Some men think of God as of one sitting like a thunderstorm in the sky. They know that there is no safety but in going to Him, but they apprehend a great deal of danger even in that.

They approach Him under an umbrella of excuses, and have, here and there, a covert under which to dodge, if they think a bolt is coming. They forget who Christ meant by the "father" of the prodigal son; and they lose all the encouragement that He meant for repentant sinners, when He represented God as in such a hurry to welcome him who had returned, that he *ran to meet him* while he was yet *a great way off*, and would not for kisses let him tell *half* his shame and sorrow. Some say 'tis dangerous to say too much of God's love. Men take advantage of it, and become Universalists. They say, "Preach justice for bread; let mercy be cake."

THE Bible is the centre jewel of which creation is the setting.

WERE the office of deacon rotary in *all* churches, as it is in ours, we should not see the absurd spectacle of deacons trying to turn away a minister because he had removed deacons who deserved removal—thus trying to make the higher office subservient to the lower.

WHILE I heartily despise the whole crew of religionists—the scribes, Pharisees, and learned dunces of our Saviour's time, who saw the most wonderful things passing about them, and did not know it—I don't want to be caught playing the same fool's part in respect to what God is working in *our* land and times.

I want to praise God, and take part in helping it along.

THE most of everything is that which is unexpressed.

Words are but little bubbles thrown up to express what lies below, for ever inexpressible.

ECCLESIASTICISM has always been the devil's cloak under which to work evil.

I THINK that every church should have charge, as one of its indirect duties, growing out of its more peculiar and important ones, of the physical interests of its members and their families; and instruction in regard to bodily training, and to the preservation of health, should be provided for all the people. Religion would gain wonderfully by the regeneration of the *body*.

THERE is not a street in Brooklyn where I could not point you out heroic women before whom the chronicled deeds of the historic dames of the ancient world would blush for very shame of their own insignificance. The world has advanced. Heroic deeds have become so common that they pass unnoticed.

WHEN you have repented of your wrong and turned from it—no matter with how little feeling, for who feels enough to forsake his sin feels sufficiently, and the man that is scourged like a hound by feeling is none the better for more than it took to turn him—*you are not to trouble yourself about it any more.*

God forgets your sin when He forgives it. So may, so ought *you.*

Great sinners, who have offended against honesty and purity, when they are converted, sometimes try to keep their former sins up before them, lest, unaware, they who had been so awfully wicked should forget it, and enjoy themselves.

They check every pleasurable emotion by the reflection, "Ah! think, think, what it was that you did. You are not worthy to laugh and be glad."

True; they are not worthy. Nor is any one, in and of himself; but I care not what their sins may have been, when they are forgiven of God, they should be cast into the depths of the sea, and remembered no more for ever.

The man that keeps tormenting himself by the memory of repented and forsaken sins, *is a fool*—a fool! To repent and forsake sin is sufficient, when there is no way of making an atonement; but if there *is* a way, the atonement must be made, or you may be sure that your repentance is a sham, and will never be accepted.

MEN confess everything but their own besetting sins. They steer quite clear of these. Who ever heard a man say—"O Lord! I am as proud as Satan—humble me;" or, "O Lord! I am so mean and stingy, that 'tis only with great pain that I can unclose my fists. Make me generous!"

SUPPOSE I were to set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and before I started, were to go to Brown Brothers & Co., and obtain letters of credit for the cities of London, Jericho, &c. Then, with these papers, which a child might destroy, which would be but ashes in the teeth of flame, which a thousand chances might take from me, I should go on with confidence and cheer, saying to myself, "As soon as I come to London I shall be in funds. I have a letter in my pocket from Brown Brothers & Co., which will give me five hundred dollars there; and in the other cities to which I am bound I shall find similar supplies, all at my command, through the agency of these magic papers and pen strokes of these enterprising men." But suppose that, instead of this confidence, I were to sit down on shipboard, and go to tormenting myself in this fashion—"Now, what *am* I to do when I get to London? I have no money, and how do I *know* that these bits of paper which I have with me mean

anything, or will amount to anything? What shall I do? I am afraid I shall starve in the strange city to which I am going." I should be a fool, you say; but should I be *half* the fool that that man is, who, bearing the letters of credit of the Eternal God, yet goes fearing all his way, cast down and doubting whether he shall ever get safe through his journey? No fire, no violence, nor any chance, can destroy the cheques of the Lord. When He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee," believe it; and no longer dishonour your God by withholding from Him the confidence which you freely accord to Brown Brothers & Co.

THE years! how they have passed. They are gone as clouds go, on a summer day. They came, they grew, they rolled full-orbed; they waned, they died, and their story is told.

Years that wrought upon us, in thought and deed, with the force and power of eternity—years, whose marks we shall carry for ever—were dissolved like the dew, and their work is finished.

And the days have gone! With a gentle swell comes their knell backward to us, over the ocean. Slipped from their cables, the bright days glide one by one away from us, drifting with airy speed, over the shoreless tide, beating faint, sweet measures as they recede from our longing view. We may stand long upon the shore, and call them; but they will not return—they are ours no more.

Awful is the dirge of years. It is an anthem too solemn and grand for tears; but we may weep for the dying days. Faintly they sigh to us of bygone hours, of moments fragrant with all human joys, of friends and familiars, whose smiles at morning cheered our way, but whose faces at evening were covered; for still as life lengthens the shadows fall, and the *past* is for ever gathering treasures.

The hopes that are born, that grow ripe and die, float out, as the days, on the ebbing tide.

Gorgeous and rich are the shrines in many lands, but what temple was ever built as some days are? Marvellous fancies, deeds, in whose doing the heart grows strong, thoughts too mighty for words, feelings that are deeper than the utmost depths of thought: *these* are the material out of which days are built, and no Vatican or cathedral walls ever blazed with such glories of picture as are often painted on single days.

As they move softly towards the far horizon, how do our hearts follow, with yearning love, the motions of the parting days! We would hold them back, but we cannot, and in the golden sunset the bright days sink. And with them how many that we loved depart! Loved! nay, *love;* for the love remains to shine on the memory of those who have left us, like the lamps that are kept burning in sepulchres.

Two weeks ago I told you that three thousand dollars had got to be raised to pay for the repairs of this house.

The plates were sent round, and about six hundred dollars were raised.

I was heartily ashamed, and have not got over it yet. Last week the trustees came, and asked me if I would name the matter again, and I said, "No, I will *not.*" But this week, upon their renewed application, I have consented to speak once more. If this don't do, you may pay your debt how you can; for I will never mention it again. I'm not going to be a pump to be thrust into men's pockets to force up what ought to come up freely.

When the surgeon comes to a place where he must cut, he had better *cut.* For more than a year I've seen that our plate collections grew meaner and meaner. I didn't want to face you with such things as I've got to say to-day, and I put it off as long as I could. Now I shall speak plainly once for all, not having the face to bring the matter up again. This debt has got to be paid, and will you meet it honourably, and pay it like men, or will you let it drip, drip, drip out of you reluctantly, a few dollars at a time? You can take your choice. I'm not going to try to drill money out of you as I would drill stones. Our lecture-room holds about three hundred people, and we collect from thirty to eighty dollars there every time we pass the plate. Our best Christians attend the weekly meetings, and they are always the most generous. In this congregation, that numbers over three thousand, we don't average *one cent per head* in our collections.

While there are, thank God, many of His poor among us, who cannot give Him a shilling without making a difference in all their arrangements for a whole week, there are hundreds of men here who ought to be ashamed *ever* to give anything but gold, or at least a bill. And they *are* ashamed to do it. Don't they, when the plate approaches, and they have put their fingers in their pockets and selected a quarter—

the smoothest one that they can find—use admirable tact and skill in conveying it to the plate, so that no one shall see what they give? Pious souls! they don't allow their left hand to know what their right hand doeth. If they have two bills, one good, one broken, they'll generally give the broken one to the Lord. The amount of meanness among respectable people is appalling. One needs to take a solar microscope in order to see some men. I'm willing to give my share, to *do* whatever the trustees desire; I shall *say* no more.

I WOULD not for the world bring up a child to have that horror of death which hung over my own childhood.

I think I never came nearer swooning than when I heard of the death of one of my young companions. I walked in a shadow for two days, hardly able to tell whether I was in the body or out of it.

The thought of death was to me awful beyond description. The toll of the funeral bell would cheat me out of my most desired meal. To my imagination its stroke was thus: "Death! hell! damnation!" Our children should be taught that a funeral is the nearest place to heaven; instead of which, I think, they oftener feel it to be the nearest place there is on earth to hell.

I do not say what death should be to the impenitent—it is a pass at which no mistake can be rectified—let all beware how they come up to it; but I say this, that to the Christian, and to the little child, it is the best and most joyful thing that life leads to—the portal into everlasting blessedness; and thus it should always be represented.

Tell your child when, after long imprisonment in school, he one day hears his father at the gate, come to take him home, and while his young heart shakes his whole frame in nervous ecstasy, that this is like what dying is, but not half as much, or half as joyful. Death is vacation. God comes to take us from this old, rolling academy, a good school, but a hard one, and bear us home with Him. Then, should the house be draped with signs of woe, as if it were plague-smitten?

GOD works upon man by means of all events, all natural influences. The mere naturalist goes abroad and says, "Don't tell me that I'm what God makes me. I'm what my parents make me, what natural law makes me, what social influences

make me. I'm the child of ten thousand different influences." The pious dreamer says, "I am fashioned by God;" he jumps all intervening causes, as entirely unworthy of notice. As usual, extremes meet in a common blunder. God does not work directly on man, save in exceptional cases. Where a man was born, and how he is nurtured and taught, make him; but all the influences that play upon him are ordained of God. Man is as an instrument of music, whose key-board is so broad that a hundred hands may play upon it, and each player execute different tunes. Many and diverse influences operate at once upon the mind of man, and although the *direction* in which he was set at his birth will have something, perhaps much, to do with what he becomes, his native tendencies will be modified by ten thousand circumstances. The natural things which touch the man are all under the control of the Supernal Power.

Young men, you come here to get good advice; now hear it. I tell you there is nothing in the world so profitable as are lying and stealing—I should not like to drop down now, before I finished this sentence—so profitable in the beginning, but so sure to be hit by God's lightning at the end. You can gain fast, but you will lose fearfully and rapidly.

When suspicion begins to teach you, the end is near.

And when that time comes, if the rocks would fall from their everlasting beds and crush you, and hide you, it would be unutterable mercy, compared with the burden of shame and contempt that you must bear.

My heart is towards the young yet. Only when I look in the glass, and see how the gray hairs are coming on my head, do I know that I am growing old. By the beating of my heart I should never know it. My heart is towards the young yet. Would that I *could* warn them so that they would heed; but they hear me, and they will go away and remember naught. They will follow *their* footsteps who are as *sure* to topple and go down to ruin, as the sun is to rise and shine.

There are men in both these cities, whose names I could call, on whom the eyes of those just entering the work of life are fixed for imitation, but whose end is damnation.

See how it is with many corrupt men. One lately died in New England. They prosper for a time; then sink into obscurity, and after a while there is a little paragraph in the paper—"Such a one is *dead*." That is all that men see.

But could they look into the man, and see his mental history for his last few years; could they see the disappointed hopes, the defeated plans, the chagrins, the mortifications—see all the vermin that haunted the secret chambers of that abused house, the evil thoughts, the wicked wishes that ran in and out, like rats and reptiles in old, dilapidated, and gipsy-haunted fortresses—see the man stranded, high and dry, dropping, dropping, dropping, until at last the rotten thing sunk entirely, and fell into utter corruption, and the papers said, "He is dead"—they would not be so eager to follow his steps, nor to dare his end. A snake can lap itself around till it inserts its tail into its mouth; if I had power to ring life thus, and make its ends meet, I would save many; but the sweet comes first, and men will not believe in the bitter until it is too late.

The lad tries being industrious for a week, and because he don't see the immediate good results, he gives up the effort. He tries dishonesty, and the gain is in his hands at once; so he calls evil, good; forgetting that evil is always ready grown, and yields its *pleasant* fruit at once. That's the best he will ever have from it; afterwards, it grows worse and worse continually.

Good is ungrown and imperfect in this life, and often its fruit is very long in ripening. Evil is the plump, round egg; good, the callow and unfledged bird, unshapely, helpless, and that cannot even peep with any strength.

But by and by the true nature of each will appear. Suppose a man were to go out and sow radish seed and acorns at the same time. In a few weeks he goes to see how they do.

"Oh!" he says, "radishes are a great deal better for timber than oak is. Here I sowed my seed a month or more ago, and the acorns haven't even sprouted, while the radishes are as big as my wrist."

You plant your evil, and it springs up like radishes, when your good has not even sprouted. A man says, "I told the truth all last week, even many times to my own hurt, and I got into a great deal of trouble by it. This week I've told lies all the week, and I can see that there has been much advantage to me in it." Nobody thinks indiscriminate lying would be good, but each man thinks that if everybody else would speak truth, *he* should then be a great gainer by lying.

Often it *does* look to us as it looked to the Psalmist himself, that the way to be prosperous and happy is to be bad,

and the way to be miserable is to be good. But the truth is not so.

CHILDREN think much more, and much more deeply, than we are aware, upon religious subjects.

I remember that I was seriously exercised upon the doctrines of election, free agency, &c., by the time that I was eight years old. I was brought up on doctrine. The things that most influence children are *acted* things; not things that are said.

I don't remember to have been affected by any sermon until I was more than thirteen years old. But the prayer and talking meetings were the ones. I used to be convicted there; and I would go about trying to be "pricked in the heart." I had got that figure, and so tried to prick myself. I wanted to be taken up by some resistless wind of conviction, and to be made to suffer such agonies about my sinful state as I had heard others tell of; for I thought that right after that would follow conversion, and I should be safe.

I don't think fear has much really good influence upon children—a *powerful* influence it certainly does have. I remember once we children were all called together into our kitchen, which we thought the best room in the house; its windows looked out upon trees and flowers, and its door, when opened, revealed the long line of road along which we always made haste to run as soon as we could gain our freedom. We were called into the kitchen to be talked to by a minister who was staying at my father's. He told us how wicked boys and girls were by nature, and what an awful end was before them if they never repented. He told us the story of one wicked boy who saw the devil coming after him. The idea almost froze our young blood with horror, and we resolved with all our might to be good, that such a fate might not befall us. But as for myself, I don't think that talk ever did me a particle of good; on the contrary, I believe I never was so bad any one week as I was that week, spite of all my efforts to stop myself by thoughts of that dreadful story, and of how I should feel to see the devil coming up the road after *me*.

I remember that one Sunday morning, as soon as I awoke, I began to play, picking the cotton out of the quilt, and rolling it into balls to throw at my brother. Suddenly came the thought, "You wicked boy! to begin the Sabbath by playing."

At once I was condemned, and ducked beneath the bedclothes lest something dreadful should catch me. There I lay quietly five minutes, as long as I ever kept still.

There came a woman to live with us—Aunty Chandler we were taught to call her; she became my fast friend, and used to beg me off from whippings. There was a tree whose apples used to get me up and out early in the morning. I was often whipped for stealing them; but whippings used to make me very brave. One morning, just as I was stealing out to go for the apples, Aunty Chandler stopped me: "O Henry!" she said, tears rolling down her face, "I cannot bear to have you whipped so; why *will* you go and get those apples?"

This was a new idea. It had never struck me that Aunty C. got the whippings on her heart. After that there were not ropes enough in old Connecticut to draw my young feet to that tree.

In those days people used to get together and pray and make a solemn time of it when a train of emigrants were about to start for Ohio. It was almost as if they were to start for another world. Well do I remember the long lines of white-covered waggons that used to wind through Litchfield, and I used to run into the house and hide under the table that they might not steal and carry me off. Well, the time came when Aunty Chandler went away in one of those slow-moving trains. I shall never forget it. I thought I was near the end of *my* gospel when she went. Her life was strong in its good influence upon me. Next came a negro servant. He was my next evangelist. I used to watch him in the field, and in the house, and even now, with my mature reflection, I cannot remember ever to have seen him do a wrong act. As I worked beside him in the field, he used to tell me his experience, and where he learned this and that hymn; and then he would sing as only the African can sing, and I used to wish that I could have such religion as that negro enjoyed. When we went to bed—he and I slept in the same garret, he in one corner and I in the other; some people would think it a dreadful thing to have to share a garret with a negro—when we went to bed he used to pile his pillows up behind him so that he could *lie sitting up*, take his hymn-book, and fasten his candle up somewhere so that he could see. He would sing hymn after hymn with such relish and enjoyment, the big tears frequently rolling down his dark face, that I used to be cut to

the heart with remorse, that I, a minister's son, brought up with every advantage, should be so much worse than a poor negro. I would lie there and pretend to be asleep, while all the time —— was singing right at my conscience, and I was crying heartily to hear him. Oh, how glad I should have been could I have changed places with that poor negro serving-man, if it hadn't been for cheating him! I think that *lived, acted out* religion does more good to children than all the talking that can be done, though talking certainly should not be omitted. That African did me more good than all the ministers that ever came to my father's house.

THE infidelity of the last twenty-five years has been that which has sought to emasculate religion, by separating it from practical life, and lifting it so far above everybody's daily and familiar use, that they might as well be without it. The pretence is, that religion is too sacred to be rendered useful in common matters. Over the church-doors men write, "Religion is religion;" and over the store-door, "Business is business." And the Church says to business, "Don't you come in here;" and the store says to religion, "Don't *you* come in *here*."

Man rejects the interference of the higher law in his business as an impertinence. But when Sunday comes, he says, "We've had enough of business all the week; now let us have the blessed Gospel."

And the minister must confine himself to "Christ and Him crucified." He mustn't mention love to God and man shown in business transactions, for he must preach the Gospel; he mustn't exhort to temperance, for he must preach the Gospel; he mustn't preach of justice, purity, and humanity, for he must preach *the Gospel*.

Why, if men catch the "higher law" on 'Change, or in the street, they hoot at it, they chase it, they hit it, and drive it from among them, crying out, "Here is this higher law escaped out of the Church, and out of the Sunday."

THE worst spectacle which this country now presents is not, I think, the governmental or political corruptions, though these are enormous; but it is that of a religious body, like the one in New York, utterly refusing to open its mouth against the blackest iniquity of the age.

And for what, in the name of heaven? What reason do they give for their strange silence? Why, because if it does

speak against this sin it will not be allowed to preach the Gospel. If every sin were as powerful as is the sin of slavery, what would these preachers of the Gospel do? Keep silence in regard to them all, of course; for, according to their views, only the smaller and least powerful sins can be safely hit.

That ponderous body can bombard men bravely for using tobacco, but it can't say one word against selling men and women to raise it. It can spend itself and exert its tremendous machinery against the awful sin of the dancing of young men and maidens, but can't utter a sound when maidens are sold to prostitution, and young men are driven off, in chain-gangs, to the rice swamps of Georgia.

The use which I make of such men, is to point the young to them, and say, "There are men whom you must shun to resemble."

The worst stamp of Phariseeism was not in our Saviour's day. It has, after years of monstrous growth, exhibited itself in the nineteenth century.

THE Bible sets us an example of fashioning for ourselves a personal God to suit our need. When I find Paul using figures to represent to himself God, as his wants required him, I know that I may do the same thing. When I want love, I may make God my tender and loving father, or sister, or mother. When I want pity, I may make Him a being of unfailing and boundless pity. When I want courage, He is my lion; when I want light and cheer, He is my bright and morning star—my God alert, my sun, my bread, my wine. We may imagine Him *everything* that is to us good and beautiful, tender and true, and know that we are not cheating ourselves by vain fancies, but have only touched the extreme outer edge of the ever-blessed reality. There may be dangers in this freedom and variety of our representation of our God; but there are dangers in all forms of our thought of Him, and in none half so much as in having no realization of Him at all, in considering Him as an abstraction of all the omnis. Thinking of Him thus, none can *ever love Him*, or *walk with Him*.

THIS everlasting twaddle of infidelity about fixed natural laws is simple foolishness.

I should like to know, now, if *man* even has not as much power over natural laws, wherever they touch him, as natural

laws have over him. True, God says to man, in one place, "Obey;" but in other places He says, "Command."

Nature can work roughly and coarsely in generalities; but she needs men's intellect and will to give effect to what she does.

Through hundreds and thousands of years she tried her hand at making apples, and they were but *crab-apples* at last.

Man said, "I will help you;" and by his industry and wisdom, the sour, miserable fruit soon covered all the hills with luscious apples.

I have power over nature's laws to make them work for my own and my children's good. I can make the lightning my amanuensis and my messenger. I can make the sun himself my artist; but when did ever the unassisted sun paint a picture? Man whispers to him, "Come down here, and I will tell thee something that thou knowest not," and the sun obeys. "Go through there," says man, and the sun goes through, and finds himself painting pictures. I should like to see him try to do that alone. I can say to the sea, "Wait on my will," and it obeys me; to the stream, "Thou lazy thing, flow no longer down hill, but up," and it flows up. When I turn it into a machine, I say to the water, "Grind," and it grinds my food. Natural laws are God's horses, and He says to man, "Vault," and he who can ride them is their master. By working them according to their nature we can make them do a million things that they could *never* do without us. By obeying, we command. They are the blind giants which our will and wisdom guide. Is not this true? Have I perplexed you with metaphysics? Have I not rather showed you plain facts, which you can follow out to almost any extent?

Remember, the question between me and the infidel naturalist is not, "Does God disturb natural laws in order to answer the prayers of His people?" or, "Does He do violence to nature that He may do any man good?" but it is this, "Is it, or is it *not*, likely that He is able to do for those who call upon Him and whom He loves as well as man can do by means of natural law for those dear to *him*?" In other words, "Is it likely that one who has given to His creatures such wonderful power over laws of His own creating, should be himself so bound and hampered by them that there should be with Him no possibility of any modification of their working to suit circumstances?" The idea is absurd, and they are fools who indulge it. The man who says and believes

that there is no effect on God's feelings and actions by prayer, is not a Christian. I'd rather a man would do as Martin Luther did—lay down his hand on a promise and say to God, "Now, here is thy word, O Lord! fulfil it to me, or I never will believe thee again, as long as I live." God will interfere and help us, no matter what laws we have broken. If we didn't break laws we shouldn't *need* His help; because we have broken, and do break them, He does help all who trust in Him, and even most of those that don't. When it is *proved* that praying alters nothing, I will say of the Bible, "It was a pleasant book; but it has passed."

Not all prayers are answered. When you ask for what would take away motive for exertion; when you ask for what you do not really need, or for what would hurt you, you will not, probably, get what you desire.

But when a man, out of his deep want, goes to God for a good gift which he is powerless to gain for himself, he shall have it. This is the seal. God is more willing to give good gifts unto them that ask Him, than parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Do you believe *that?*

I DO not fear science—I love it. I do not look with jealous eye upon it lest it cut off some of my ground. I accept all truth, when it is proved, no matter where it carries me; but I don't accept what every man calls truth, any more than I believe the tale of every beggar that comes to my door.

Infidels are working for God, though they do not know it. They shake and rend His truths until they think that they have destroyed them, but they have only cleared them of the shuck. I think infidels are like swine that, going into a corn-field, tear down the mighty grass, and crunch its leaves and ears, trampling into the earth all that they cannot eat. Then, they go out thinking that they have devoured or buried all the corn. Yes, they have buried it for resurrection; for from its grave it shall rise in tenfold glory, to wave all the more luxuriantly for that husbandry of hoof and snout. So is it with infidel swine in the corn-field of God's Word.

WHOEVER has been enabled to take hold upon another's interest in such a manner as to *give himself*, for the time being, for that other, and to feel that his friend's life is dearer than his own, has attained to one of the purest and highest states into which man on earth ever comes. And he should

understand that a very high experience has been granted him.

To be lifted above temptations—never to have a wrong thought, or a wrong moving of the affections—is a very good thing, but it is not being so *Christ-like* as he is who bears upon his soul another's life; who suffers for him, yearns for him, would give his life to do him good. This is the very spirit of Christ Jesus, and *if we suffer* with Him, we shall also reign with Him. And we *must* suffer with Him, if we would reign with Him. But now, the other truth which meets this, We have no business to be so linked with any other human being as that their destination shall be ours. All suffering more than that which makes us ready to do all in our power for their good, we must fight against. It can do only harm. We must have our best and dearest friends to know that our peace in God cannot be destroyed. Not husband nor wife, brother nor sister, nor friends, have any right to cause rust and canker to enter our souls for them. *Who* shall separate us from the love of God? We must do all we can, and do it in a cheerful winning way, so as not to repel and torment them, thus hindering the very thing we would hasten. But when we have done all, we *must* wait God's time. This is what all those injunctions to patience mean. But there is another thought—"What if our friends should die?" You have no right to meddle with that, nor to try to settle the state of any one who *does* die. And, beside, do you not know that this necessity of seeing men go unprepared to death, was what the apostles, the prophets, yes, and Christ himself, was obliged to look upon, and bear? But remember, God's pity is for the time of trouble and distress. He is your tower: run into it, and be safe. I would not give two cents for a faith that wouldn't help me while I need help. Christ has offered to bear my burdens, and *He shall* have them. *Here* are my trials, temptations, and woes, not in heaven; and here is where I have most need of my Saviour.

No man is born into the full Christian character, any more than he is born into the character of a man when he comes into the world. A man at conversion is in the state of one who has just come into possession of an old homestead. He has the title, and he can make for himself a beautiful home. But the dust, the dirt, and the cobwebs of years choke all the rooms, and must be cleared away. Many sills

and beams are rotten, and must be replaced by new ones. Chambers must be refitted, walls newly plastered, the whole roof must be searched over, and every leak stopped. There must be a thorough cleansing and repair before the mansion is habitable; and when all this is done, 'tis only *an empty house* that the man has.

The same kind of thing that man is, who has trained himself into freedom from wrong, without having become faithful in right deeds.

Now, for a man's house he may buy carpets ready made; but there is no loom that will weave carpets for his heart, except the loom that is in himself. Furniture, beds, chairs, and tables, he may buy for his house, but rest and peace for his soul can only be worked out within his soul, and long labour it often proves. He may purchase paintings, whose voiceless language shall make eloquent his walls, and statues to grace niche and pedestal, and books to fill his many shelves, but the painter, the sculptor, and the publisher, for the man's mental house, are all in his own heart.

I THINK that persons who are sincerely resolved to fashion themselves upon the pattern of Christ, but who can see no marks upon or in themselves of their own success, are like artists painting in the dark, beautiful pictures which shall astonish them with their loveliness when the morning shines upon their work. Or, they are like flowers, talking together in the night, and saying, "We are not beautiful as we desire to be." They wished to be arrayed in gay colours, and to have jewels of dew upon their buds and leaves; but they answer mournfully to each other's questions, "It is all darkness upon you; nothing can be seen." Then they hold up their heads, and stretch out their leaves; but a weight oppresses them, and again they droop, complaining that no brightness or beauty is given them. But all the while the night is distilling its gentle moisture on those unconscious flowers, and the very jewels for which they murmur and sigh, are gathering thickly on every leaf and stem. They are bathed in the dew of freshness and fragrance, and crowned with the most radiant gems. And by and by the morning breaks, and the moment that the glorious sun rolls above the horizon, and floods, with his slant beams, the world, ten million flowers glisten and glow with jewels of such lustre as was never known in diamond from Golconda's mines, nor in any precious stone on monarch's brow.

We are all painting pictures in the dark. Oh, this painting in the dark! what is to be revealed when the light cometh? It is fearful.

Periodical excitements are normal to the human constitution. Our very life stands on this foundation. Sixteen hours' excitement and eight hours' stupor—sleep.

There is in the human soul "a common feeling," which, being roused and stimulated, renders it possible for men to do in one hour the ordinary work of ten. It is somewhere said, "God never works by periodical fits." But I can hardly think of an instance in which He works otherwise.

A man has a right to stimulate himself, for right purposes, in his lower, intermediate, and higher nature. It is needful that he should do so. All men recognize this need in regard to business, politics, social life; but if needful here, where the senses and even selfishness have much influence, how much *more* needful when we rise into the realm of moral and spiritual things! Revivals of religion are in strict accordance with natural law. They are not to supersede the regular, calm, organized action of the Church, but to work with all this, as an occasional, especial power. Men are energized by the Holy Spirit, and made able to work rapidly. But when the excitement is worn out, let it go. Don't try to keep it up unnaturally, or by effort. All strong feeling must rest *quick*.

To men who object to this intensifying a work, or to repenting in a hurry and under excitement, it may be said, "See to it, then, that you take the first calm moments when the reaction arrives to become a Christian, or you will prove that these objections of yours are all mere excuses to escape conversion."

When men have a great stone to move, they first dig away all the earth around it, working moderately and taking care to reserve their strength. When the earth is removed, they apply their lever, and now all take hold. At the word, "Now heave, men, heave!" each man strains with nerve and sinew—he throws his whole strength into that moment's effort, and the stone is forced from its bed.

Now, what if some man, just as the final effort were about to be made, were to cry out, "Stop, men, stop! Have you reflected well on what you are about to do? Have you thought whether you will be able to keep on working all day at the rate you will work while upheaving that stone?"

What better than this is he who objects to being lifted up upon the spring tide of a revival, because he is afraid he cannot always afterwards live up to that mark.

He is not required to live so. It is not possible. His feelings should always be deep like the sea; but they should *not* always roll and swell like the sea's agitated waves.

There are seasons in which the social and the moral feelings should thus move and mount, and at such times becoming a Christian is much easier work than at others; and although there are many very good Christians born when all is calm, and there is no religious excitement about them, yet *I* like a revival-born Christian best; for he is apt to be more open-hearted and of more use.

Some say revivals cause a great deal of self-deception—quick conversions are not apt to be thorough. This might be a sensible remark among heathens who do not know the first principles of the Gospel; but in communities like ours, where from the very cradle men are taught all the head knowledge that they need, and where the question is simply one of the will, "Will you submit to the rule of Christ, renouncing the ways of wickedness, or will you not?" it's a mere quibble of unbelief. The New Testament pauses not a moment over such miserable arguments. "Repent and believe *now*," is its doctrine, and three thousand souls were added to the Church in *one day*. The Lord recognized the fact that many tares would be gathered in with the wheat; but He never, on that account, sanctioned people to *wait to be soundly converted*. "Let both grow together till the harvest," is His command.

This doctrine of delay, of shunning excitement upon a subject which ought always to excite men more than anything else can, and which ought to cause them to be in the greatest possible haste, is a delusion and trap of the devil, in which he has caught thousands of souls.

Struggling and distressed Christian, when we meet in heaven where will be that heart-break that you told me of?

Will you not look me in the eyes and *laugh* to think you told me that your heart was breaking?

God's *glory* is His *goodness*. This, by His own showing.

From my window I saw, after the last dreadful storm, a ship struggling into port. Her sides were all chafed and

scarified, as if she had been beset by the robber waves and forced to battle for her life. Her mast was broken, her sails draggled and torn. Her spars and yards were gone, and she looked almost a wreck.

Out on the sea the waves had risen against her, and all the thievish winds had sought to do her harm. A desperate time she had indeed of it, but she had made her port; and now, as she dropped her anchor and lay securely in her moorings, her hull sound, her cargo all safe, her crew alive and well, what to her was it that she had been obliged to fight her way, or that out at sea the waves and winds were even yet raging and mad with storms? She had gained her harbour; she had made a prosperous voyage. The end for which she was sent forth she had accomplished—not the less nobly that through storm and tempest she had held upon her way.

But what was it to the ship *John Milton*, when she was floating, piece by piece, upon the waves—when her cargo was all sunken, and her crew all drowned and lying on the beach, or in the sea—that all the first part of her voyage had been pleasant, that all the middle of it had been over smooth and sunny seas, that she had passed in safety all the islands, and sailed prosperously over the equator? Her voyage was a failure, for she never entered port. The end—the *end* stamps a career as successful or disastrous; and the *John Milton* did not answer the end for which she was sent forth.

Men are as ships sent forth upon the sea, and that man who gains the port of heaven, though he be more battered and bruised than any ship that ever sailed up yonder river to its anchorage, he is the successful man; but he who founders on the beach, no matter how close it be to the open gates of heaven, has made a bad voyage, though his log-book may tell of sunshine and fair winds all the way to the shoal whereon he struck and found destruction.

THE ship of morality draws too much water ever to ride into the harbour of salvation. No one ever was or ever will be able to enter with her. Her keel always reaches too far down. A lighter craft must be obtained, or you will be for ever outside of moorings.

MIRTH is the sweet wine of human life. It should be offered sparkling with zestful life unto God. He desires no emasculated or murdered offerings.

In man's natural state, he inhabits only the ground-floor of his soul's dwelling—the apartments which look out upon the back yard, where is accumulated all the filth and garbage of the household. The upper apartments are all fastened up and injured from disuse.

When a man has deliberately and understandingly resolved to turn from all his evil ways and devote himself heart and soul to the service of God, he is converted. There has been too much fog and darkness thrown about this simple matter of conversion. The whole difference in the state of a justified man and a man under condemnation is, that one uses himself first for God and his fellow-creatures, and the other uses himself first for *himself*, and second only (if at all) for God and his fellows. There are multitudes of men who would like to be Christians, if they only knew how; but they are waiting to be struck by some mysterious and romantic flash, which will never come. If they feel like praising and loving now, let them do it; there is no danger of its being wrong. Many wish to be able to *begin* their Christian course with joy and triumph. Let them begin, even if it be in darkness and doubt. The joy and triumph will await them at the other end.

If I had only had somebody to tell *me* the things that I now tell *you*, how much trouble I should have escaped! I used to sing hymns from the outside, just as hungry boys who have no pennies look in at bake-shops through the windows. "Ah!" I used to think, smelling the hymns, "I, too, *could* enjoy them, just as all these Christians do; but they are not for me. *I* am not a Christian." Now, I say, if there is any one in this lecture-room who is holding his heart back from feelings that he thinks should belong only to Christians, unhand yourselves; give your heart its will; let it rise, exult, love, and praise. God is working in you. To check these feelings, or to hide them, is to smother the Holy Spirit. There is no reason why any soul before me this hour should not resolve to take Jesus Christ for his Lord and love, and rise up from his seat a converted man. There is no need to go days and weeks under conviction of sin. It is no credit to a man to have a terrible time being converted. It is a mean business. Suppose that I had lied to my partner in business. Suppose he were to charge it upon me, and I were to try to evade the matter, and were to oblige him to chase me through a whole week, crowding me here, poking me there, and pressing me in every possible way to own my

fault; until at last he cornered me so closely, that seeing escape to be impossible, I gave in, and said, "Well, I *have* lied, and I am sorry," just because I could not help yielding. How mean a spirit should I thus show. How much better, if upon sudden press of temptation I had sinned, for me to stop at once when the lie was charged upon me, and say honestly, blushing crimson with shame, "Yes, yes, I am wrong, all wrong. I am sorry, and will do so no more."

Why will not men, when they see their guilt and danger, face right about and make short work with themselves?

That which is wickedness *per se* in man would be infinitely worse in God.

Christians all ought to reflect the character of Christ. But the young Christian says, "It cannot be that the Spirit of God is really in me, or I should be more like Brother So-and-so. He, now, seems a good deal like Christ, but who ever would guess what Christ was like, if he judged by me? I wish my experiences were like that good brother's." Now, suppose the flowers in the garden were to say, "Since the rose is the queen of flowers, she should be our example; we should all bud, and leaf, and blossom, just as the rose does, if we wish to do it right."

But you say, "The work of the Spirit of God should be the same, should it not?" *Is it* ever the same? Does God allow any two men ever to perform the same radical acts in the same manner? Does He not seem to abhor sameness? Your Christian graces must be such as consist with your original nature, the character and disposition which God implanted in you at your birth. Your experience will be such as consist with your education and circumstances; they will be unlike those of any other person. And you must not be discouraged because they do not now shine as do the graces of the older Christian; nor think your graces are worthless because they are yet unpolished. The negro slave in Brazil, when he works the diamond mines, is allowed his freedom when he finds an unusually large diamond.

A poor slave who has never seen any diamonds but those that are worn upon the breasts of his master, his mistress, and their family and friends, is sent to the mines. Working away there, he picks up a large stone, which looks as if it might be a diamond, if it was only bright; but the negro don't know what to think of it. He says it can't be a dia-

mond; but a companion thinks that it is one. The slave takes it to his master, who seizes it with exclamations, and declares to the slave, "You are a free man. There never before was such a diamond found in these mines!"

"What! massa!" says the trembling slave, in great trepidation and bewilderment of joy,—for bad as freedom is for negroes, it always excites in them powerful emotions of pleasure,—"What, massa! dat dull stone a diamond? It don't look nothing like what massa wear in his shirt bosom."

"But, don't you know, Sambo, that diamonds have always to be taken to the lapidary, and ground and polished, sometimes for two or three years, before they are ready to wear? This is a most valuable diamond; and you are, from this very moment, a free man."

There are diamonds in the rough among you; but you will be ground and polished in good time. The lapidary has you in hand.

THERE are men who hold themselves aloof and look askance on this mighty revival.* They see men hurrying along at noon towards the various prayer-meetings, and they say, "It's a fever which must have its way, and then it will subside." They see a young man going to the meeting, and think it nothing to excite interest. They do not know that that young man had come up to a point where, if nothing had occurred to save him, he would have been bound over to destruction at the very next step. They do not see, in some far distant village, the mother or the sister praying and weeping for him—no sound of a father's groan is heard—none of these things; the petitions that for years have assailed the heavens, both day and night, do not cling about the youth as he walks the street; but that prayer-meeting God made to answer the desire of the parents, and to bring salvation to the son. And eternity will show that the young man's walking towards that place of prayer was the beginning of his march to heaven.

I WOULD rather be reckoned with the lowest and meanest children of God, than take rank with the crowned kings of the earth. I am sorry that all Christians don't live so as to glorify their heavenly Father; but even as they are, I would rather clasp in my embrace the most imperfect one who really *is* born of God, than to link hands with monarchs. Where

* The great revival of 1857-8.

is the man (there *are* creatures by courtesy *called* men, who are ashamed of their old-fashioned parents, or of their country relatives when they meet them in the city streets—it would take a regiment of these miscreants to take a decent-sized hair for the head of a genuine *man*) who would not rush from the presence and communion of princes, if he saw on some forlorn and ragged little child in the street, the lineaments of his father or his mother, and knew that the wanderer was his own brother? Do you think that man would not choose the ragged child to a dozen princes? And in the Christian's face I ever see the lineaments of my beloved Father—God.

A REVIVAL is as when a sportsman goes out with his gun, and sends its charge into a flock of pigeons. Some fall dead at once, and he sees and secures them; but others, sorely hurt, limp off and hide, to die among the bushes. The best part of this revival is, that while you can only see those who are shot dead, and fall down before you, there are, thank God! thousands in all parts of the land, being hit and wounded, to go off unnoticed to their own homes, and God heals them there.

YOU will bear me witness, that two years ago, when we were right in the midst of the great political excitement of 1856, I said once and again, that it was utterly impossible to intone the American public so with the sentiment that Christianity must enter into and rule in politics as truly and entirely as elsewhere, without laying the foundations for a revival of religion as broad as the whole land. The seed then sown is now ripening.

I THINK, when men sincerely try to work for God and souls, they are as men who go out to sow seed in a windy day. A few, very few, may drop where they think that they sow all; and when they go to seek for fruit, lo! there is but a handful, and the men are disappointed and grieved. But their seed is growing in other fields, by the wayside, on the mountains, in the forest, everywhere; and at the end they shall be astonished to behold their harvest.

WE say to men, Are you willing to serve Christ, and to love Him? They answer readily, "Yes, we are; but we want to be *converted*." By this they mean that they want

to have *all that blessedness of sensation* that they have heard about; they want to find that every tendency and aptitude to sin is cut up by the roots. They want to be converted so that they'll never have anything more to do but to feel the joy of salvation. They want God to do all their fighting for them, and that is what He never will do. When a man is converted, he is *set right*, armed for conflict, and ordered to *go on* through his enemies, until he reaches heaven. He often *must* have hard and bitter times in his struggles with himself; but God's grace will be his stay and consolation, and at the other end he will find what he is too apt to look for at this.

I HAVE hope, I have courage. Our Churches are certainly purifying themselves; they are coming up to a higher type of religion. That John Baptist work before our last election prepared the way, and we *are* going forward. A speech like that just made in this meeting,* twenty years ago would have blown it up like a bombshell; now I don't think that we have even lost grace or good nature through it. God used to walk by *inches; now* He goes by seven-league strides.

I THINK that I am a man-of-war, and every gun in me is a fifty-four-pounder; and when circumstances call for the grace of indignation, I can bear my part; but wrath is not so good as love.

THIS one thing I have noticed in everybody—the moment they come to a clear apprehension of the love of Christ, they turn right about upon the minister, or upon the Christians who have been labouring, perhaps for years, to bring them to that very point, and say, "Why didn't you tell us this before?"

Why, it's what we've been *always* telling them. I think that trying to point a man to the love of Jesus is like trying to show one a star that has just come out, the only star in the whole cloudy sky.

"I can see no star," says the man. "Where is it?"

"Why, there; don't you see?"

But the man shakes his head; he can see nothing. But by and by, after long looking, he catches sight of the star; and now he can see nothing else for gazing at it. He *wonders* that he had not seen it before.

* By a well known anti-slavery man.

Just so it is with the soul that is gazing after the Star of Bethlehem. Nothing in the world seems so hidden, so complex, so perplexing, as this thing, until it is once seen by the heart, and then, oh, there never was anything that ever was thought of that is so clear, so simple, so transcendently glorious? And men marvel that the whole world does not see and feel as they do.

THE everlasting God, who sitteth at the head and top of universal dominion, makes Himself the servant of the very least and lowest of His creatures. Should we, then, be too proud to help each other? Should we scorn to lend our help, or influence, or sympathy, to the *least* among our brothers? How despicable must such a disposition in us look to God!

THERE is nothing of which men know less than of themselves. They do not understand how their own characters are formed; they stand in great doubt as to their own moral states before God. They cannot judge or take account of themselves, much less of their fellows. It is a great comfort to know that there is One who perfectly knows all that is in us, and all that concerns us, and who will take us for just our real worth. It is a comfort to trust in God. Oh, when a little child is weary, marching through a desert towards his home, when he feels that he has no longer strength to travel, nor wisdom to direct his way, how glad is he to have his father take him in his arms to rest him! And when the child, just before falling asleep, raises his eyes for one more glance at the face above him, and sees it firm and calm and set for home, how sweetly he resigns himself to slumber, confident that all is well! And thus do we, in the weary march through life, sometimes love to recline upon the bosom of the Eternal Traveller, and take our hour of rest confiding in our God.

THERE are men in this congregation who are in the situation of undermined towers of a beleaguered city. I have seen the enemy hollowing them out at the foundations, I have seen the kegs of gunpowder rolled in, and the train laid, and now I see the enemy hiding just behind his covert, with his slow match in his hand, waiting for the word to fire the train. I have warned the fated men, but they will not heed me. I cannot even pray for them any more; but I

live in daily expectation of the explosion. I wait the hour which shall blow them to destruction; for I know, almost as though it were already passed, that their doom is sealed.

Now, if any of you before me tremble, and think, despairingly, "It is I," probably it is not you. The anxious and troubled ones are not those who are given over to ruin.

We are all so imperfect, that when we really consider of our case, remembering that God sees us as if by candles, into the very darkest parts of ourselves, we wonder how He can *love* even the best of us. All men believe that God exercises a *general* benevolence towards men; but that His feelings towards them amount to actual *love*—yearning, tender, desiring love—and that in regard to the most wicked, prowling thief, the vile lecher, the lost and desperate, even the murderer—this is what staggers us. That He loves not only His elect, who strive to serve Him, but wretches, just because it is in His own disposition to love what *needs* love, is our God's chief glory. That He has something in His pure and holy nature which causes Him to love sinners, while He abhors their sins, is Gospel teaching. Herein lies our hope and our salvation, for it was while we were yet at enmity with God that He sent His Son to die for us.

There are no troubles which have such a wasting and disastrous effect upon the mind, as those which must not be told, but which cause the mind to be continually rolling and turning over upon itself, in ceaseless convolutions and unrest.

A pirate cannot be pardoned for his piracy because he is generous, and in most respects a moral fellow. He is out on the high seas as a pirate, and is game for hemp and gallows, though he read his Bible every day, and do a thousand kind and good actions every week. But if he repent of his ways, and try to become an honest seaman, a few forgetful oaths may be forgiven him. If he is sailing right, and with right intentions, he will not be strictly dealt with, though he do knock down a man now and then when he ought not. So a man who has not accepted Christ as his Saviour, who is using himself just as God did not intend that he should be used, need not hope that his occasional good and generous deeds can do him any service in the matter of salvation. A man who has given himself to Christ can be forgiven and helped anew, if he halt and stumble, because his face is set

in the right way, and his heart's desire is that he may attain unto a perfect obedience. His sins will be each day pardoned by the mercy of Him to whom he looks for all of this life, and that which is to come.

THERE are a thousand things which between the right persons are pure, but which are so sacred and delicate that the merest touch from the world cannot be given without causing the utmost pain. One who would go eavesdropping to catch the confidence of parent and child, husband and wife, or lover and lover, and would then, to the distress and confusion of those concerned, report what he had heard, is a scoundrel.

THE common way of representing God as being very anxious for, and jealous of, His own glory, has a bad influence on the minds of men until they justly understand what His glory is. We are not left in doubt as to that. Moses prayed and said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And the Lord passed by, proclaiming, not might, majesty, and dominion, not omnipotence, nor any awful attribute, but, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." These are the things in which God places His glory; and this is the glory which man is called upon to promote, and which God is bent upon preserving.

THE old-fashioned lightning-rods were made all in one, and when they drew the bolt, it came with mighty force, and the crash often did much damage; but now the old plan is improved, and by having many points to the rod, the lightning is scattered, and made to strike with greatly divided and diminished force, and to sink harmlessly to the earth. If conviction were to strike the sinner as lightning strikes the first sort of rod, the man could no more live than he could were he to look into the face of God. But through the mercy of Jesus Christ, it strikes only point by point, a separated and enfeebled force. There is no need, in most cases, that it should be otherwise. More feeling than is needed to produce right action is unnecessary. God be thanked that we are *not* allowed to see all the plague of our own hearts!

THERE is no mercy nor pardon for any man who does not

feel himself utterly helpless and lost. A *hopeless* sinner is the only one who has reason *to hope* for forgiveness. If a man comes to Christ asking only a little help, thinking that he can patch himself up with that, without the humiliating confession of *utter* unworthiness, he will get nothing.

THERE are materials enough in every man's mind to create a hell there.

WHEN my head, that is worth so little, aches, I feel it to be unspeakable relief that I may lay it upon His breast whose head is worth so much. God's head never aches. He does not have to study. He sees—sees the naked soul of every creature. When the apostle says to the Jews that the Word of God is quick and powerful, &c., he brings to their mind the idea of the priest's examination of the sacrificial victims. The Hebrew priests not only examined each animal externally, but they also took the beast and split him open at the back bone, and made a minute investigation into his internal state, before he was offered. This habit was the foundation of the form of expression in the verse;* and then the apostle goes on to say, that before God *every* creature is laid open as the sacrificed beast was before the priest. The argument which he draws in these verses seems at a first view to be a strange one; but the apostle always speaks from depths which the world knows not how to sound. God's perfect knowledge of us, of all our countless interlacing thoughts, of the chequered play of all our passions, of all our acts and motives, of the very darkest and foulest pits and crevices down to the very bottom of our souls,—the idea of His escapeless gaze, why it seems *terrible*, if we think of Him only from the stand-point of our sins; but when we begin to consider His perfect love, and His perfect honour, that he has known us from everlasting, even as He knows us now, and that He is never surprised (as we are ourselves) at anything we do, but has sworn to give us everlasting life, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, if we only trust to Him, we can begin to understand that, *because* He knows us, we may come *boldly* to His footstool for help in every time of trouble. I think it is not safe or best for us to give unreserved confidence to *any human* friend, *however* dear, for none are always altogether noble and unselfish, none that will not in some way, or at some time, abuse such confidence.

* Heb. iv. 12, *et seq.*

The power of hiding ourselves from each other is most mercifully given, for men are wild beasts, and they would devour and destroy each other but for this protection. But into the ear of God we may pour out each secret—our very self, and the confidence will be kept sacred. He invites our confidence, not because He does not already know all that we can tell him, but for our own sake He bids us pour out our souls to Him, and He will, in return for our confidences, give us pity and consolation; for He can be touched with a feeling for our infirmities.

We look on men, and judge them; but it is not right—we see but the outward appearance. I meet a man with a face so hard and grim, and an eye so cold, that I thank God that I do not live with that man. But if I could see the path by which he has come up to where he now is—if I could see how he leaned with all the weight of a once generous and confiding heart, on what failed him in time of need—if I could see how he has been stood from under, and been pierced and bored, and the very life-blood of his affections pressed out by a thousand troubles and crosses, and perhaps by *the infernal machinery of the household*, I should feel more like throwing my arms about him, and trying to console him for all that had made him what he is.

Whatever there *is* in election and reprobation—and I don't know *what* there is in them, therefore I never preach them, for I will not preach what I cannot at all understand—there certainly is nothing that hinders any man from gaining salvation. When *I* undertake to preach election, I turn to the last chapter of the Bible and read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come," &c. It is *the last utterance* of the sacred volume, and it is sincere. If I doubted God's perfect sincerity and simplicity in such invitations, I should say that those who worshipped Him were the sinners, and those who refused to pay Him homage were the saints. I think the doctrines of the Bible are like flowers that are in the morning all covered with spiders' webs. They are obscured and mystified by miscreant theological spiders. There is nothing so simple that these men will not change it into a mystery, which they themselves, nor any who hear or study them, shall be able to understand.

A man who impoverishes his soul for the sake of worldly gain is like one who, desiring to learn to play upon a harp,

tears out all its strings, wherewith to pay for his tuition. He gains gold, perhaps, but when it is his, he has left to him no capacity to enjoy it.

Perfection has usually been understood to mean absence of evil, but it does not mean that any more than absence of weeds means harvest.

The Bible measure of perfection is the measure of the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. This ought long ago to have settled the much vexed question of Christian perfection. Until a man can measure himself by Christ, and come up to His stature, he must not claim to be perfect, and he will not arrive at that fullness in this world. Conversion is not instant deliverance from all wrong tendencies, from all errors and follies, nor even from all sins. It is but the *beginning* of a good character.

There may be instances where men are converted into a very high state of righteousness at the outset; but I *know* that this is rarely the case. Generally, the young convert is but set about, and has his way to cut through ten thousand native heart-born foes. There are his passions and his appetites that for many years have had their own headlong will; and there are all the selfish instincts; there is rampant pride to be subjugated, and the work is long and hard. But every man is encouraged to work hopefully by the command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Let no hard, fault-finding man of the world look upon the Christian when he fails or falls, and say, "He is no Christian, else he would do better than that." He will often fall and fail; but he must always rise again, and with renewed courage and faith go forward, working out his own salvation. He *never* need despair, for *God* worketh in him, and that is strength enough for anything.

There are some men who have not much native strength or stability of character, and though while they are out of the way of trial they walk well, when they are among the every-day influences of life, they are drawn far from what they know to be right. Here, in church, where there is prayer and singing, they feel all right, and are sure that they are very near to heaven; they are inspired by the spirit of the place, and feel melted with love and devotion. But to-morrow they go over to New York. They don't hear

many hymns there. Religion is not much the subject of conversation and consideration over there; it is all sharpness, shrewdness, warding off, grasping stocks, money market, &c.; and the man goes with the hurrying, hasty tide. Selfishness, duplicity, greed, are about him and within him, and so he wanders from the way, and does a hundred wrong things. But by and by is his meeting evening; and among his Church brethren the wavering man sits down to hear of Jesus and of duty, and of the experiences of others. The same nature that caused him to go so wrong when among those whose influence was wrong, now draws him another way. A brother rises and gives utterance to some touching thought, the man is broken down at once; tears stream down his cheeks, his heart swells, he must rise and speak—he sings with his brethren, and his face shines with inward happiness. He feels very good again; and, for the time, he is as sincere as anything can be; but the world looks on and cries, "Look at him! he is an old knave and hypocrite." He is no more a hypocrite than a thermometer is. It *may indeed be* that he is not a Christian. He whose feet are upon the Rock of Ages should stand more firmly than this; but he is sincere.

THERE are many Christians who, in their affections, are thoroughly submissive. When they suffer *there*, they grow more sweet and humble—their trials make them better. Though their affections are deep and tender, they bow before God when he touches their hearts in them, and they say and *feel* that He does all things well, and that He is blessed; but you take these same men, and trouble them in their business, and where is their Christian submission then? Apparently they are no better than infidels. They have not educated themselves to yield their wills to the will of God in their *business* affairs; afflictions there cause them, as it seems, to grow worse and worse all the time.

MANY persons have read the Bible so much that to them it has come to have very little practical force or meaning. A man will read aloud the passage on "charity," or "love," as it should be rendered, and not an echo of its meaning will be in his heart. He will read it reverently, as he thinks a Christian man should, and will then arise and begin straightway to be NOT "long-suffering" nor "kind;" not to bear all things, believe all things, or hope all things; not to think no evil, but to *be* "easily provoked," and to behave unseemly,

without one passing thought that what he has just read should have ought to do with his daily life among his associates. This scripture is thus a dead letter.

At first it is sufficient that the Christian believes the truths of the Gospel because they are in the Bible, given by the Spirit of God.

When first the traveller follows the direction of the guide-board, he does so because it says that is the way to go; but when he has gone that way once, and again, and finds that it always ends just were he intended to stop, he looks at the guide-board no more. He has forgotten it, for he does not need it now. He believes in the road, because he knows by experience that it will lead him whither he desires to go.

Thus should the Christian of ten or a score of years believe in the vital truths of religion, not alone because Christ declares them, but because he has felt and known them in his own heart and life. Faith is first, but afterwards is actual knowledge—we do "*know* of the doctrine."

If you desire a new church which will accommodate six thousand people, if you will raise the full amount required for its erection and furnishing, I will engage to speak in it so that all shall hear me. I will do my part in the contribution also; but I tell you beforehand, that I will have nothing to do with building a church, or with preaching in it, of which, when it is finished, even the poorest workman can truly say, as he stands and looks upon it, "I lost by that job."

If you will have such a building for me to preach in, no man, from the largest contractor down to the poorest labourer that carries a hod, must be able to say that he lost a single penny by the enterprise. Money sufficient to pay to each man what is just and right must be raised, or the matter must be dropped quicker than it was taken up. As to my being able to speak so as to be heard in any part of such a building as you contemplate, I should think you might be satisfied of *that* by the way in which I am speaking *now*.

Men are agreed in this, that all do glory in something. Each one glories according to his society. The honesty and gentleness, the truth and guileless-heartedness, which are the glory of the true gentleman, would render a man the mark for scorn and contempt among burglars, and gamblers, and aldermen, and other thieves.

We are not to try to crush out any quality. If we put a ball through the head of a wild young horse, he will be made quiet and harmless enough; but he will be good for nothing. The right way is to break him and harness him; then he will be fit for use. Just so it is with the faculties of a man's mind. They all need breaking, harnessing, and right directing; but they must not be killed or maimed. That faculty whose perversion becomes pride is the gift of God, and he has given directions for its proper action. "Let him that glorieth glory in *this*, that he understandeth and knoweth me." To "glory" means to value one's self; to feel self-complacency, because of some real or fancied superiority. But we are forbidden to glory in *anything* except in our knowledge of God.

How far do men come from obedience to this injunction! They glory in everything *but* that. One walks the streets with such an air that you would say he supposes that God had fashioned a very masterpiece when He fashioned him—yet no; it is not even his body that he so much glories in, as in the things which he has stuck on to it. He glories in his dress, and in his perfumes. Another glories in his muscular form, in his fine proportions, and in his strength. He goes through the streets almost wishing that some one would come at him that he might display his power of self-defence. The pride of these men lies in the things which they possess in common with the beasts of the field. But others glory in their riches and their skill; others again in their genius. These things are not to be despised. Even riches God reckons as good; for they are among the rewards promised to those who diligently serve Him. Beauty and attractiveness of person, and the possession of winning manners have this much in them: they are the gift of God; they give pleasure to others, and ought to do so to their owners. They should be a cause of gratitude, but never of "glorying." It is a sort of organic affectation with some to pretend to despise personal symmetry and beauty.

Wealth, in the economy of Providence, is made a powerful means of civilization, and it is right to value it in its place. It is good, sometimes it is even grand, to know how to fill the day with profitable transactions, to make every movement tell for the advancement of some one enterprise; but men should not glory in their business or executive force of skill, or in their sharp foresightedness. They should glory in *this*, that they *understand* and know the Lord.

Perhaps there may be men now before me who are saying, "I have valued myself all wrong—God help me—I will try to benefit by this discourse;" and perhaps some man will go home and make a note in his journal to the effect that his heart was touched, and he resolved to do differently for the future. Monday morning he will rise, and as he starts for the city he will say to himself, "Now, *remember*." As he walks towards the ferry, a quick step sounds behind him, and a laughing voice says, as he gets a friendly slap on the shoulder, "Ah! ah! but that was a capital hit of yours—that mortgage, you know—I've heard all about it. But didn't you trip that fellow's heels up well? I declare, it *was* capital."

"No! you didn't hear about it, though, did you?"

The man is instantly as full of vain-glory as champagne is full of bubbles. Sunday and its impressions are forgotten; the week is here; his good resolves are gone—where the bubbles go. That one compliment in regard to an act of wicked shrewdness has shot him all through of infernal electricity, and he is *a business man* until the next Sunday. In what does that man glory?

As we ascend in the ranks of humanity, we wonder on what the great thinkers, the great inventors, the painters, the poets, the orators, and architects most valued themselves. We think we should like to know what Shakspeare, that great student of human nature, thought of "the immortal Will," when he, in turn, arose before him, as probably he did—and we think it would be grand to know what Dante and old Homer valued most in themselves. Then our thoughts, still lifting themselves, look on the angels, and wonder what is their self-estimate. We tremble as we approach God, and hardly dare to wish to hear in what He glories. He, infinitely above all things that are created, the Architect of all architects. Why, St. Peter's is a mere rat-hole compared to the smallest worlds that God flings from His fingers faster than sparks fly from the blacksmith's anvil. But He has told us in what He glories; and first and chiefest is His "loving-kindness." Not merely kindness—it is a compound word. There are ten thousand kindnesses that have in them not one spark of love; but that word, "loving," has a personal meaning—it shows us that there is the tie of affection between us and our Creator. God glories in His "loving-kindness, His judgment, and His righteousness," and man should glory in understanding and trying to imitate the same.

I think it would be a good sermon for a man to take pen and paper and write down, first, all the things in which he does glory; next, the things in which he ought to glory; and then an indiscriminate list of his acts, and thoughts, and plans, and wishes. But I think it would be easier to induce men to go alone, at midnight, and in the dark, into the charnel-house, and drive a nail into a coffin, after the manner of the superstition of some, than to go down into the depths of their own selves, and write out truly, with real judgment writing what there they would see.

Coin that is current in one place is valueless in another. Suppose an Indian, far in the western wilds, were to say, "I will become a trader with the whites. I will go to New York city and buy up half the goods there, and come back and sell them, and then what a rich Indian I shall be!" He then collects all his wampum beads, which are his money, and compared with other Indians he is very rich, and away he journeys to yonder city. Imagine him going into Stewart's, and offering his wampum there in exchange for their goods. They are refused. They were money in the woods—in the city they are worthless. And there are thousands of men who are carrying with them, to offer at the judgment, what is no better than the Indian's beads. They are reckoning on their generosity, their prompt payment of all their debts, their various good natural qualities; but when they present them, they will all be found worthless trash. The things that have made them strong, and valued, and important here, will there be worse than useless to them.

Critics say that Raphael's "Transfiguration" transgresses the rules of art. It is two pictures in one. Christ is represented upon the mountain top, in His glory, the disciples having fallen, in wonder and awe, to the earth; beneath this scene is the one of the possessed child, about whom the horror-stricken disciples stand, unable to afford relief. With the merit or fault of this double representation I have nothing to do; all that I know is this, that picture is a figure of human life. Above, Christ often hovers in glorious light; while, below, the devil is tearing the child.

What a man is, is not what he is on Sunday, when the organist plays to him, and the minister plays to him, and all good influences play to him; but it is what he is in the

week-day, when his life is wearing, and working, and weaving for him the garment in which he is to stand and be judged.

MANY that are last shall be first, and the first shall be last. There are men whose entrance into Wall Street is like the appearance of blue sky after a north-east storm. They move along, leaving a trail of bows and smiles, and heartburnings and envy, behind them. How the sallow faces light up as old Moneybags approaches. He is pointed after. "Do you know him? A wonderful man!—worth his millions—smart as lightning," &c. That old obese abomination of money is their god; and yet there is not one particle of genuine worth in him. He has utterly defiled and destroyed his manhood in the manufacturing of wealth; he is a great epitomized, circulating hell on earth, and when he dies, hell will groan—one more woe.

But there are other men—they are seen sometimes. Business men say of them, "Oh yes, we know them—clever fellows enough—mean very well—do some good among the poor—have classes in mission schools, &c. They are just suited for that; but, bless your life! there might be a million such men in the world, and nothing would ever be done."

These men die, and heaven rings with new shouts of melody. There they are known and waited for, and with triumphant joy are welcomed home.

THE artist, when he begins to learn to draw, finds the greatest difficulty in making straight lines and circles; but when he has coaxed the juice of his brain down into his fingers, so that *they* think, he has but to give one glance at the object he desires to represent, and the lines appear, the circles fly off from his fingers, and the picture is drawn, almost without thought. Thus involuntary should be right-doing with the Christian. He should form for himself a settled habit, a sort of refined spiritual instinct, by which he should be led constantly, and almost unconsciously, to shun the evil, and to choose the good.

SOME men have pronounced the rebukes of conscience to be the punishment for sin. I marvel how they can reason thus; or I should marvel if I did so at anything in man. Either all is marvellous in him, or nothing is.

But can any reasonable being believe that the Creator would institute a punishment which should deal most severely with

the smallest sins, and least severely with the greatest? Would God decree that the worst man should bear least punishment, and the best man most? Yet look at facts, and deny not that this is the way in which conscience punishes. Everybody knows that it is the first and least sins that are most soundly scourged by this feeling. It is in proportion as a man is pure that his sins afflict him. It is at the *beginning* of a wrong course that we run against the spears, that we kick against the pricks, that we are excoriated. When a man is in the deeper places of guilt, he is generally far more comfortable than he was before he had descended so low. How can any one imagine that the Almighty would contrive such a miserable, one-sided mode of punishment?

CHRISTIAN men, what testimony does your life yield to your sons? Is it that religion, your duty to God, has the first place in your regard, and business success the subordinate place? Or is your practical life (I do not say your theoretic life, *that* is more frequently right) such as to cause them to conclude that you think religion a good thing, but that a man *must* succeed in business anyhow, and after that he ought to serve God as well as he can?

REPENTANCE is not feeling bad about your sins, or talking humbly about them, or calling yourself hard names, or thinking that you are the greatest of sinners, or writing in your journal about your depravity, or praying, or going forward to the anxious seat; it is *turning from your sins to righteousness.* When you feel bad enough to do that, it is sufficient. More feeling is useless, and often dangerous. It is this firing up of feeling which causes most of the mischief complained of in revivals. There is no merit in deep feeling. It is no credit to a man that God was obliged to shake him over fire and brimstone to make him a convert. Turn—blessed are they who, the moment they are made to see that they are sinners, and are lost without the Saviour, go straight to Him, without waiting to be lashed thither—such are the best conversions—such are the most noble natures. But some have presented God and His law in such a way, as to offend against all of taste, generosity, and manliness—I had almost said against every affection there is in man; and then they call the stirring that there is within against this view of God the rebellion of the natural heart, and they teach that there must now be a pitched battle between God and the soul—God

saying, "You shall submit," and the soul declaring, "I won't;" until, finally, when driven to the very verge of perdition, by the thunders of the law, the soul turns short about and hastens to God—rather than fall into hell. There may be, there are, experiences like this, but they are not the rule, they are not needful—at least not to many. In my office of pastor, I am often called upon to talk with persons who are in trouble, because they think they were converted too easy, or because they never had such times as Payson had, when he had dyspepsia, and fasted, and had horrible views of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." "If I was really converted, why was I not converted just as Brother A—— was? If conversion is the work of God, it will be alike, won't it? There will be no mistaking it."

Men are the work of God—did ever you see *two men* who were in all respects *exactly alike?* God's taste evidently does not choose uniformity.

Two ships come into New York harbour. One has crossed the ocean with a favouring breeze. She had all sails set, everything below and aloft spread to the pleasant wind, and not one hindrance was in her way. But another soon enters, and everybody hastens to board her. The captain of the fortunate craft is one of the first to greet his brother captain, "How came you in such a plight? Did you have a storm?" he says. "Storm!" repeats the other, "I guess we did. I've been upon the ocean forty years" (you know with captains the last storm is the worst that they ever saw), "and I never saw a time like the one we've just passed—we've been near foundering a dozen times. We've lost our topmasts and our bowsprit, our sails are torn into ribbons, our bulwarks are stove in, we've lost our boats; I've lost all I had, and my men are nearly worn out. It has been hurricanes one side or another all the way across, and we have but just got into port alive." The captain of the uninjured ship goes back to her decks and says, dubiously, shaking his head, "Well, boys, I begin to doubt whether we really are in New York, after all. It can't be that we have crossed the ocean; *we* never had any experience *like that.*"

Never did a summer pass that did not smite on the storehouse of autumn, and cause it to open its doors and bring forth of its abundant treasures.

There was a time when honesty, truth, and fairness of

general behaviour were the chief things that religious teachers insisted upon; and men almost forgot that Christianity had any inner life; but the reaction came, and to this external religion arose an opposition. The defrauded faculties asserted their claim, and now was the era of intense spiritual devotees, who taught that there might be a true and vital Christianity in a man's heart, distinct from, and independent of, his outward life and conduct. It was faith and works at war with each other, and religiously bombarding each other with texts; instead of walking hand in hand in holy union. There is no way in which a man can prove that he has true faith in his heart, except by good works in his life.

MANY persons suppose that there is required, in order to a man's satisfactory conviction that he is a child of God, a vivid and unmistakeable assurance of faith. They think that the heart is as wax, and like inert wax they suppose it lies, until the Lord takes His signet ring or seal, and stamps it with His name. Then, after feeling that impression, the soul is certain of its sonship. It may wander away, and the name may be covered from sight by ten thousand faults and sins, but down beneath them all, it is *there*, and it cannot be erased. Now this is not the way in which the Spirit of God usually bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. Without doubt there is immediate actual contact of God's Spirit with the spirit of man, whenever this is best; but ordinarily all our experiences are made to come to us through the medium of our own natural states, through the influences of things around us, and within us. *Anything* that produces in the mind the reasonable, sober conviction that we are His, is the true witness of God's Spirit with ours. The evidences of a man's Christianity (if he *is* a Christian) are not so difficult and serious a matter as men think. Why, any one who has sense sufficient to judge whether he is a good citizen or not, or whether he is the affectionate son of his own parents, can tell whether he is a child of God. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." "Ah!" you sigh, "but I don't always keep them." Well, ask that little child how he knows that he loves his parents; he will answer you, "Because I love to do what they want me to do." "Why, my dear child, you are always doing what they *don't* want you to do. You can't prove your love to them by that rule." The poor child hangs its head, and says, "I don't know as I can." He cannot answer you. You ask again,

"My child, how do you *know* that you love your parents?" "Why, why, I *do* love to please them better than anything else in the world." "Ah! but I have just shown you that you do not always try to please them; how can you say that *this* is your proof of love to them?" The child is silenced; but in his little heart he knows that in spite of his disobedience he does desire to do his parents' will; and that he *does* love them, whether he perfectly obeys them or not. He thinks, perhaps, "I am a poor child, a hard child to manage; I give them a great deal of trouble, but I love them; I am their own child after all. They would never give me up; and nothing on earth could take me from them."

Faith is the life of a child, and that is why the Saviour declares, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." When, therefore, you examine yourself by the rule of obedience, and find that you are not perfect there, see if it is your greatest desire to honour Christ by keeping His commandments, and if you are trying to do so, and if it is the grief and pain of your life that you fail as you do. If you wish, more than anything else, to be His, if you yearn to have Him for your friend, if you feel that *you must and will belong to Him or to nobody*, you need no more remarkable "witness." If you were not His before, you are so now; so enjoy Him afresh—*'tis sweet making love again.*

THERE is nothing on earth better than a good woman; and there is nothing on earth worse than a wicked one. The nature of a true, pure-hearted woman is lifted up until it well-nigh touches that of angels; but the nature of a bad woman strikes beneath, until her roots are fed by the fiery sap of hell.

SUPPOSE one of the sheep in a fold were to go to the shepherd, and say, "I think I'm your sheep, because you get six pounds of wool off me;" and another should say, "And I think I'm your sheep, because you get four pounds of wool from me;" and a third, "I hope I am your sheep, but I don't know, for you only get three pounds of wool from me; and sometimes it is but two." Finally, suppose one poor scraggy fellow comes who don't know whether he is a sheep or a goat, and makes his complaint; the shepherd would say, "I know who are the best sheep, and who are the worst. I wish you could all give me ten pounds of wool; but whether

you give me ten pounds or one, you are all mine. I bought you, and paid for you, and you are all in my fold, and you every one belong to me." It is not how much a sheep brings his owner which proves him his. The proof that the sheep belongs to the shepherd is, that the shepherd bought him and takes care of him.

THE main thing is to be determined to go towards heaven. If the man resolutely aims for that place, he will not fail to reach it in the end, however much he may wander off his track—pushed this way and that by temptations. The most unskilful navigator may gain the port for which he steers, even though his course across the sea be zigzag, if every time he takes the sun he comes back to his course, and perseveres in his endeavours to gain his desired haven. He may justly say, "Though I am a bungler, and a very poor navigator, I am no smuggler, no pirate; I work hard to gain my port, and I believe that I shall gain it in safety." Thus, the Christian is often constrained to cry out, "Lord, Thou knowest that I mean to hold an even course towards Thee; but Thou knowest, also, how I am pushed off here by wrong impulses, and drawn off there by vain desires—how pride, and vanity, and selfishness impede my way; and how often my appetites and passions trip up my feet, and cast me to the earth. Yet I will come back to the path. I do desire to keep it. The settled and deliberate resolve and aspiration of my soul is to walk in the way of Thy commandments."

WHEN I was at Fall River, I was obliged to rise at four o'clock in the morning to take the train. I took my carpet-bag in my hand, and ran, but was in trouble lest I might be running directly from the cars, instead of towards them. There was not a person in sight; but I saw a light in one upper window. A watcher was there. I rang the bell, and asked information as to my way. It was given. I was about right—only needed a little help; and now, knowing that I was in the right way, I did run. A bird might have counted it doing well to keep up with me; for I expected every moment to hear the bell, and the rushing off of the train, and then I should be there, and my people without a sermon on Sunday. Only let me be sure that I was in the right way, and I was willing to run. So says the Christian. "*Only* let me be *sure* that I am on my way to heaven, and there is nothing that I am not willing to do or to bear."

Well, if you are so earnest, know that Christ is the way; and if you *are* desirous to cast away all that shall hinder your race, I think you need not doubt that you are already in it.

THERE are some things that money cannot buy. The spot of land where your child lies buried, could it buy *that?* Or the last letter or gift of the best friend that you ever had on earth?

AHAB was just such a man as would have done to appoint governors for Kansas. He could cause the doing of mean and wicked acts, and yet not know anything about them. He was not responsible for the murder of Naboth—*of course* not—how should he know what his wife intended? He knew that she had promised him the vineyard; and he knew that when *she* had determined to give it to him, it was already as good as his. He was aware, also, that the woman who was thus pledged to oblige him knew no law which could stand a moment against her desires. Resolute, crafty, cruel, *not* "hard-faced"—for she was, probably, very beautiful—she marched straight on to the accomplishment of her purposes, whatever might be trampled under her feet in her way. But he gave no orders; he merely said, "There is my desk, Jezebel; there is my pen, my papers, and my signet; use them as you choose. Of course, you will do nothing wrong." Imagine the two to look at each other just here—"*Of course*, Jezebel, you will do nothing wrong."

No doubt Naboth might have had twice the worth of his vineyard had he chosen to sell it. He might have had a great deal better land, and have raised three times as many grapes. But he knew that there were some crops raised on his farm which he could get nowhere else. The larger yield of grapes might be very well in their way; but he, beneath the trees and the vines under which his fathers had for generations sat, and where, beside his mother, he had sported when a child, and where his brothers and sisters were born, could drink sweeter nectar out of airy cups, than all the juice of grapes ever pressed upon the hills of Samaria. Naboth was right to hold on to his home. There were garnered memories that all the wealth of Ahab could not buy.

But Jezebel wrote her letters to the elders and to the nobles of her kingdom—to the "*elders* and the *nobles!*"—and she ordered them to proclaim a *fast*. When people meditate a deed of wickedness particularly atrocious, they *often* feel that

they had better have a fast first. What devout men those "elders" must have been! and how noble those "nobles!" How acceptable to God must such fasts be! And they set Naboth on high among the people, and the false witnesses were found—no trouble about that, when the queen commanded it—and the good man was dragged out and stoned, and dogs licked his blood. Well! Naboth deserved his fate—he was an "agitator." He agitated the king: he would not let him have his vineyard for a kitchen-garden, and Ahab was so agitated about it that he couldn't eat his dinner, and that agitated Jezebel very much. She did not like to see the king rolled over on the bed, like a great baby, with his face to the wall. And *they* were "the government:" so Naboth *was* an agitator of the government of his country, and he deserved stoning.

When this agitator was dead, Ahab went down to take possession of the coveted vineyard, which, as its owner had died as a criminal, lapsed from his heirs to the crown.

As the king was complacently viewing his prize, lo! there stood before him the first growth of this desired garden, sprung to full size in one night—the prophet who was sent to pronounce to the wicked monarch his doom.

"In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even *thine;* and the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the walls of Jezreel." And this was literally fulfilled; for they were soon after miserably slain and dog-eaten. When Ahab and Jezebel laid their plans, and executed their wickedness, they had forgotten God. Men do so still. Because He that sitteth in the heavens keeps quiet, they think that He is not regarding; but He is. Poor Naboth may have felt that the Lord knew not his wrongs and his distress, but we see how that was. And we see, too, by this account, how God looks upon the unrighteous actions caused by the hands of agents. Ahab was not going to hold himself accountable for the results of what Jezebel, his agent, chose to do. God, however, held him to a strict account. Retribution has a long arm—it reaches down through many years—and it is a sheriff from which there is no escape, however skilfully we may dodge all others. Thousands and ten thousands of men, would they speak out their secret convictions, would say that the very wickedness upon which they had built their highest hopes of worldly prosperity and happiness was the opening of the pit which whelmed them in destruction.

We must not too sharply blame the elders and the nobles for their part in this matter. They were but obeying the law. They did not want to trouble their minds or endanger their interests, about the wild and romantic notions of "the higher law." As good citizens, they must obey the requirements of government.

This is exactly what was done in our country at the time of the enactment of the fugitive slave law; and there were not wanting efforts to induce the clergy to exhort the people to submit to the law's requirements, and to aid in its enforcement.

The young ministers were very refractory, but there were numbers of the old, and hitherto respected and honourable clergymen, who were prevailed upon to aid in trying to cloak that enormous iniquity. They did *not* cloak it, they only uncloaked themselves.

Daniel Webster stooped to influence these men to this step, both by letters and by personal address, and it was taken. When our own elders advocate the enforcement of this manner of government, why should we bear too severely upon the elders who procured the death of Naboth?

IT is not worth while for any one who is yet young, who has not yet soiled virtue, or honesty, or manly honour, to try the effect of doing so. Young men, be true to virtue, be honest, be religious, so shall you have peace in your later years.

A CHRISTIAN, just born into the kingdom, is often like a loaf of bread when its materials are just put together. The baker has mixed them, and left the bread to rise. You go to the dough and say, "Are *you* bread?"—"No," says the dough, "I am not." In an hour you go again and ask, "*Are* you bread?"—"No, I am not," replies the dough. "I feel a little stirring" (said with a rising of the shoulders) "in me, but I am not bread." In two hours more you try: "Are you bread now?"—"No," is still the reply; "I'm sponge, but not bread. I'm not baked, nor eaten yet." But by and by, after the baker gives it the final kneading, and it is ready for the oven, when it is *baked*, it owns that now it is really bread. Yet it has gained no new element since the first mixing. The kingdom of heaven in the heart is like leaven which a woman hid in a measure of meal until the whole was leavened.

It has been said that a statesman will not soil his hands by doing the vile and dirty work that is demanded by the present system of politics; but that he keeps for his use persons who are not squeamish as to what they do, so long as they are well paid for it. But the story of Ahab tells how that sort of management is dealt with by the Lord.

There are men in these cities known as abolitionists who, when occasion calls for it, shut their eyes and bid their Southern agent do the best he can for them. They say, "I must do business; and I can't afford to lose ten thousand dollars by my Southern customers. 'Tis a bad affair, no doubt. Don't let me hear a word about it. Here, I leave the matter with you. Do the best you can for me. *I wash my hands of the whole business.*"

Ah! it's rather difficult getting that sort of stain off. I tell you, the pious merchant, seated in his slippers comfortably by his Sunday fire, reading his religious paper, while his agent at the South is selling men, women, and children, body and soul too often, is held accountable for all the wrong, disaster, and misery thus caused.

Don't you believe it? I appeal to God's judgment bar; and we will take up the subject and debate it again there.

Any dishonest deed done by the most extensive and respected firm—the making out of false bills of sale, the giving in of wrong invoices at the custom-house—no matter if these things be done by the hand of the greenest clerk or the last and smallest boy employed in the business—will be reckoned for, *first* and *most rigorously*, with the first in power in that firm.

Ah! there is a great deal of craft and cunning among men —they are very shrewd and subtle, and can go far and long in artifice and duplicity; but *God* is a match for them all.

A greedy man is not long in growing covetous, and when the grasping and avaricious passions become swollen and inflamed, there is always danger that they will break out into some deeds of deeper wickedness. He who finds himself feeling sorry that another's house is larger and better, or that his prospects in life are fairer than his own, may be sure that the worst form of envy is upon him; before he knows it, he will covet that which is another's; and then he will be in perpetual danger of committing crime in order to obtain it. The more he looks at what he wants, the more he will want it; which is always the case with us when we want

what we must not have. It is right to wish to have good things like those owned by our neighbours, if we can make fair trade for them; and if our neighbour is willing to sell that which is his, we have a right to wish for and purchase that; but our desire must go no farther than this. The moment we *cherish* a desire to get from him that with which he does not wish to part, we sin. The desire, cherished, to steal makes a man a thief.

When an old man, who has spent seventy long years in this world, who has seen almost the whole of life, and is trembling on the very verge of the grave, comes at last to the Saviour, drawn by that gracious Spirit that will save unto the uttermost rather than permit the prayers of His saints to be in vain, I am glad that his soul is saved—glad for his sake—glad for the sake of the parents long ago gone home, and glad for the sake of the other faithful friends who have prayed scores and scores of years for his conversion; but after all, 'tis *a mean business.*

This giving all the greenness and efflorescence of one's life —all one's strength and beauty—to the devil, and then, when one has sucked all the pleasures that he can get out of sin and the world, coming and offering the dregs of his life—his old worn-out corn-husk, to the Lord! 'tis *dirt mean!* If any of you young people meditate such a course, you will not be likely to be allowed the chance.

I am not afraid of a laugh, even in the meeting-house, nor on the Sunday, if it come of a right spirit. It is often better to laugh than to weep; and to laugh in the very presence of our Maker is well, if it be the laughter of Abraham, and not the scornful and unbelieving laughter of Sarah.

Why is it, when the coffin is unearthed, and that which has lain long within it is exposed, and when the father and the mother, bending over it with tears and anguish, call tenderly with the soul's utmost yearning, "My son! my son!" that the dust makes no reply? Why is not the mouldering mass moved? Why does it make no sign, but only the nimble worms creep in and out, and the noisome dust settles closer together? It is because the man is *dead.*

Why is it, when lover calls to lover to return, when the confiding one who has believed in man, as she should believe alone in her God, and has been *rewarded*—as *man* rewards—

pleads with the miscreant who has stolen from her her store of love, making no requital, when her tear-dimmed eyes and quivering lips beseech him, when all her soul is poured before him, and she utters her hopeless cry in his very ear, does he not pity and regard her? It is because the wretch is dead, *dead*. Dead to all that lifts him above the brute; dead to whatever is not earthly, sensual, devilish. And God calls to men, He woos them, He entreats them, and they answer not, nor hear, because, as He declares, "They are *dead* in trespasses and sins."

THE man who designedly wins the love of a woman when he knows that he either cannot or ought not fully to requite it—there is not an evil thing on the earth or beneath it that is so base a knave as he.

THE Jews were as pious as people are now-a-days. They hated everybody that didn't belong to their Church. They looked upon the Canaanites just as *we* look on infidels, heathens, and *abolitionists*.

WHEN you come to Christ you *must* come as an offender —you must be sorry for your sins, and perfectly willing to give them all up, or He will never receive you. Suppose a man were to strike a child, or a sick man, or a feeble woman, everybody would cry "Shame!" But if he, upon reflection, grew ashamed, and went humbly and confessed his fault, and tried all in his power to make up for it, men would let him up. If, however, the man who struck happened to be one of your *consistent* men, obstinate and conceited (whose consistency is not in never *doing* wrong, but in never *confessing* it), he won't repent, nor atone. He will say, "Well I *did* it, and it must *remain*." The world will call that man a brute. In these things the judgment of the world is that of Christ.

Suppose a man were to call upon the physician, and say, "Well, sir, I want your services."

"Are you sick?" says the physician.

"No; not that I know of."

"What, then, do you want of me?"

"Oh! I want your services."

"But what for?"

The man makes no reply.

"Are you in pain?"

"No."
"Is your head out of order?"
"No."
"Nor your stomach?"
"No; I believe not. I feel perfectly well; but still I thought I should like a little of your help."
What would a doctor think of such a case as this? What must Christ think of those that ask His help, not feeling that they really *need* it?

I THINK that one reason for my great love for trees, and flowers, and birds is, that through the gentle ministrations of these things I was taught a better way of prayer than any which before I had known. I found my way to God stepping on the soft green leaves, and lifted by the songs of birds.

WHEN men complain to me of low spirits, I tell them to take care of their health, to trust in the Lord, and to *do good*, as a cure.

MAN'S face is a disturbed face; it shows that in his soul there is no rest, not even in his home. Disquiet is with him in the broodings of the night, and repose comes not with the flush of morning.

ATTEMPT to be aristocratic in the Church, and the Church dies. Its true power consists in cutting the loaf of society from top to bottom.

TIME is to us as a beleaguering army; parallel after parallel is drawn around us, and ever and anon we see an enemy's flag waving over some outwork. Charge after charge is made against us; and as sight, and hearing, and touch, fail before the assaulting army, oh woe to man if he has no hereafter as a final citadel into which to retreat.

THERE is a pass beyond which no man's honour can go. Beware the narrow and intense moment of the pressure of temptation.

ASK any man, and he will tell you, "I expect to live again." All men believe it; but this cold faith of the head is a different thing from that certainty which sometimes

thrills through the heart, and makes us long for the future life, as a school-boy longs for his father's house.

It is time we were done talking of death as "The Great Tyrant," "The Enemy," etc. Death—it is only God's call, "Come home." It is but the messenger to bring them home sent to home-sick children at a boarding-school; or the permission to return to his native land sent to an exile.

Religion is the Bread of Life. I wish we better appreciated the force of this expression. I remember what bread was to me when I was a boy. I could not wait till I was dressed in the morning, but ran and cut a slice from the loaf—all the way round, too, to keep me until breakfast; and at breakfast, if diligence in eating earned wages, I should have been well paid. And then I could not wait for dinner, but ate again, and then at dinner; and I had to eat again before tea, and at tea, and lucky if I didn't eat again after that. It was bread, bread all the time with me, bread that I lived on and got strength from. Just so religion is the bread of life; but you make it cake—you put it away in your cupboard and never use it but when you have company. You cut it into small pieces and put it on china plates, and pass it daintily round instead of treating it as bread; common, hearty bread, to be used every hour.

A man's *ledger* does not tell what he is worth. Count what is *in* a man, not what is *on* him, if you would know whether he is rich or poor.

Love that has no fear of God is always false and weak.

Of all impotent creatures, man is weakest, when he attempts by his own strength to put himself down. It is ocean trying to put down waves with waves. No storms are like the storms that rise when man attempts to conquer his passions.

There are days when the blood flows like wine—days when the sky is blue, and the birds sing, and the flowers blossom, and are sweet about us—when life is an anthem and delight, and on such days this world's joy and love suffice us. But a change comes soon, and when we are weary and disappointed, when the skies lower into sombre night,

when there is no song of birds, and the perfume of the flowers is but their dying breath, when all is dreary autumn; *then* we yearn for Him who sits with the eternal summer of love in His soul; and we know that all earthly affection is but a glow-worm's light, compared to that which blazes with such effulgence in the heart of God.

When a man gives proof that his heart is sound, and that his life is sound, there is no divergence of opinion that should keep us from fellowship with him. I am sensitive in behalf of theologies; but when theology puts its hoof upon the living, palpitating heart, my heart cries out against it.

Those truths which, though rugged, have grip in them, have in themselves presumptive evidence of their truth. We are to have toleration, but not of falsehood, nor that which is founded on indifference to the truth. It makes all the difference between life and death, between destruction and salvation, what a man believes. Because a man sincerely believes there is no chasm before him, when there *is* one there, will God the sooner save that man's neck if he goes forward?

Most of the religious controversies are of details. The great denominations now stand apart from each other on grounds which, by their own general confession, do not touch the individual Christian character.

If there was no grit in a grindstone, how long would the axe be in grinding? and if affairs had no pinch in them, when would there be made a man? How can a man walk by faith, unless compelled to go where he cannot see?

The most powerful way of teaching truth is to show what it has done for you.

Sentimental aspirations after goodness may be very well in their way; but it takes more than these to make a saint. A man (or a woman) may sit and read the Bible all day, and cry over it, and think how precious and holy it is, and how good God is, and then may go away and pray all night; but if the reading, and reflection, and praying, don't make a better man of him—if their effect is not to brighten and sweeten his disposition, and make him more kind and loving to God's

creatures that are in his company, or in his power—if he can shut his Bible, and turn with scowling brow and unpitying heart to the orphan or the stranger within his gates, he has the very spirit of the Pharisee. He that loves God let him love his brother also.

God works by the Church just as far as He can, but when she makes herself stiff or shallow, His workings overflow, and run in a hundred ducts besides.

Those who think that the whole army of human deeds must go roaring through the thoroughfares of life whelming men in the general rush, and that no Sabbath notice must be taken of it—who make the pulpit too holy, and the Sabbath too sacred to be used in bringing individual courses and developments of society to the bar of God's Word for trial, are the lineal descendants of those Jews who considered the Sabbath so sacred that our Saviour desecrated it by healing the withered hand. Would God He could appear to His Church in this our day and heal withered hearts.

The world was made what it is that you might be made what you ought to be. Your daily duties are a part of your religious life just as much as your devotions are.

Because our impressions are right we have no business to flash them unpreparedly and unadvisedly in the faces of men.

The test of a good institution is that it digs its own grave; for institutions are to humanity but what scaffolding is to a house, or a mould to the thing that is moulded.

When God means to make a man useful in the world, He generally sends him first through fire—He puts him into the forge and on to the anvil—and often He chastens most whom He loves best.

Men confound earnestness and solemnity. A man may be very much in earnest and not be very solemn; or he may be awfully solemn without a particle of earnestness. A solemn nothing is just as wicked as a witty nothing. A man may be a repeater of stale truisms, he may smother living truths by conventional forms and phrases, but if he put on a

very solemn face, and employ very solemn gestures before an audience of sound men—men soundly asleep, at least—that will pass for decorous handling of God's truth. The difference between Christ and his contemporary teachers was, that He spoke live truths with the power of His own life in their utterance. The rabbins spoke old orthodoxy, dead as a mummy; but they spoke it very reverently; they never violated any professional propriety; they never forgot how to move, how to speak, how to maintain professional dignity. They forgot nothing except living truths and living souls. What if they did not do any good? What if everybody died about them? What if they never had any fruit? They charged all that to Divine sovereignty.

Young Christians often get discouraged, and think that they bear no fruit, and shall be cut off. They see that Christ promised His disciples that He would dwell in them, and that they shall bear much fruit. Christ did not mean that fruit should come at once, all ripened. Remember to whom He spoke—men who were for years after this getting it through their heads that He was to die for them. It was twenty years before the fruit grew upon them that we find clustering in the epistles; and then only two or three of them had anything to do out of their own time.

When the gardener looks in the spring to see if the branches of his vines are alive, he is satisfied if he see the tip of the most tiny bud—he don't call that a dead branch. There was but one of the disciples that seemed much changed for the better during the life of Christ—that was John. He was one of those persons who, soft and velvety outside, have in them a core of granite, who, under a smooth aspect, carry the charge of thunder. He was the one who wanted to call down fire from heaven to burn up the people who had offended his Master. His affections, when not disturbed, were tender and sweet; but thwarted, he grew bitter as gall. Yet he came at last to that gentleness of character, by which he is now known; and, after a score of years, grew able to pen those fervent letters, so remarkable for ringing all the changes of love. Indeed John seems to have forgot every word in the language but "love." It is not in one year, nor five, nor ten, that you will ripen.

But you are dissatisfied, and you sit down and try to think how Christ looks, and try to feel that He is with you; and you take the Bible, expecting that now you are converted,

it will shine out at you like a house whose windows are illuminated. Christ will not reveal Himself to you in that way, and that is not the manner in which the Bible will be a light to you. You must make it "the man of you counsel." What a word is that! what an idea it gives you of how you should use the Bible!

A man offers you a note. You are not quite sure about it. You say to him, "I don't know. Hold on; I'll let you know in half an hour;" and away you run round the corner. Your lawyer lives near by. You show him the note. "Such a one offered me this. I thought I'd just speak to you about it. What would you do?" "Better have nothing to do with it," says the lawyer, shaking his head. You run back, and say to the man, "I've concluded not to take that note."

Then some transaction is urged upon you. You hesitate. You don't know exactly whether it will stand in law. "Wait," you say, "wait a minute—I can't decide yet," and away you go round the corner. "Oh, yes," says your lawyer, "that's all perfectly right and safe;" and back you run, and the matter is settled. He is the "man of your counsel." Just in this way should you consult the Bible, in regard to all the actions of your life. You may read all your life in it, and never get the meaning out of half its texts; for I think that many texts of Scripture are long in their periods, like comets, and only cast their light upon us when the appointed time comes; but unlike the comet, when once they have risen upon our horizon, they leave it no more, but their splendour burns on bright unto the end. There are texts which I got into twenty years ago, and I'm not half through them yet.

CHRISTIAN graces are not in the Bible. The Bible tells us what they are; but it is in the struggle of life that we are to find them. A book of tactics is good to teach the soldier evolutions, but it is the parade-ground and the battle-field that make veterans. Men *can* make an idol of the Bible.

EACH one of our faculties, when well cultivated, becomes an interpreter of God, a window through which we can look out and see God. Take benevolence; in its natural state 'tis mere good nature, not much of a window then; but when you have exercised and trained it, until you see the interest of another lying side by side, on the same plane with yours, and can choose that first, doing good to another

rather than to yourself; when you give up rest, and comfort, and health itself; when you uncomplainingly endure martyrdom and crucifixion for the sake of your nervous and sick, and fretful children, who have wound you up, and run you down, and almost worn you out, *then* your benevolence shows you what kind of feeling was Christ's when He suffered and died for you.

It is all very well to have a minister to preach about religion; but you get used to him. I stand here, and say over and over to you the same things till I wear the year smooth. Every Christian who has come to a realization of Christ, is a natural and appointed preacher of Him. You all know what is the effect here, when from one part of the room and another, men rise to corroborate each other's witness to the truth and effects of religion. Now, if the Church would make the week a witness that should answer back and confirm the Sabbath; if you, in all your places of business, about the streets, everywhere, would but corroborate, by word and deed, in spirit and in truth, all the truths that I utter from the pulpit; if the young convert would call to the companions that he has left in the world, and the more advanced Christian would encourage the young one, and the white-haired saint again stand on the heights, and call, "Come up, come; from where we stand can be seen the gates of the Holy City," how would the influence of the Church be felt, and how would be hastened the conversion of the world!

When we begin to climb a hill, 'tis hard work; we begin to puff, our legs begin to ache, and by the time we reach the top of the hill, we are pretty well tired out. But once up, we begin to descend, and now we wonder that we could have made so much ado about our climbing. We resolve that we never will do so again. And we shall not until the next time. But when another hill is to be ascended, it will be the same thing over, unless we resolve with something more than the ordinary firmness of men.

There are hills in the moral as well as in the natural world, and we manage worse about the former than the latter.

How few people there are who have a really trusting spirit. 'Tis easy enough to trust, in regard to things you

don't care anything about; but upon the point where you are most sensitive, how far do you trust in God, and not worry? Have you, within five years, learned to trust yourself and your property, and the health and life of those dearest to you, with God, in a settled confidence that He will do what is best with all? And can you be cheerful in this trust? The husbandman goes often to examine whether his fruit ripens fast. You are spiritual husbandmen, and should do likewise. It is astonishing, as one walks the streets, to see *how few good-looking people there are.* Very rare is it to see a luminous, transparent face, open and trustful. There are such natures, but they are rare. There are some people that can trust God about everything but their soul's salvation.

WHEN a hunter goes out to hunt, he seldom finds all that he hits. But going about the woods the next day, he finds here a buck, there a turkey, and something else elsewhere. "Ah!" he says, "I thought I brought down more game than I found yesterday. Here it is now." As I go about the country lecturing, I am so frequently being met by persons who say to me, shaking my hand, "I was converted among you. I have reason to know YOU, though you don't know ME," that I am beginning to feel that, on these jaunts, I only go a little wider into my own field of jurisdiction. Lately I was struck by the gratitude and humility of a mother whose son came last winter to New York. With parting injunctions and prayers, the mother very earnestly warned her boy to keep out of dangerous places; and *especially* to be sure and not go near that wicked place, Henry Ward Beecher's Church. She made this such a particular object of her caution, that, of course, the young man came. He was converted, and returned to his mother so changed, that she, too, was *converted.* When I was there, she, from gratitude, had gone over as far one way as she had been the other; and was feeling very bad to think she had judged ill of one, who, since he was the instrument of her dear son's conversion, must be so very good a man. I do feel that the influence of this Church is wide. There will hardly be, ere long, a town in the land that will not have branches from us. How humble and how careful ought they who exert so wide-spreading an influence to be!

THERE are some assertions of Scripture which imply high

attainments in the whole round of Christian character. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man;" that is, if a man has obtained that self-command which shall enable him never to say a wrong thing, the battle with him is nearly over. He may reckon it already won.

When I dig a man out of trouble, the hole that he leaves behind him is the grave where I bury my own trouble.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," &c. The life and death of Christ was but the working out of the love of God. The affection and the yearning of heart towards His erring creatures, was just the same in God before Christ came, that Christ showed it to be while He was on earth. It is just the same still. There is *no change* in God, or in His love. Man, nor woman, need fear disappointment *there*. It has been the custom of some, a custom too much prevailing, to represent God as being under no manner of obligation to do anything for His creatures after they had broken His law. The trouble with this statement is that there is a great deal of truth in it; and yet it has been made in such a manner as to give a very wrong impression. In God's own nature there is a *necessity* for His efforts for man's redemption. Where is the earthly father, worthy to bear the name, who would not feel that it was as much his duty as his desire to do all in his power to restore to the paths of honour and honesty a child who had fallen? And shall we imagine that God, the Infinite Father, is under less obligations to do good to the creatures He has made than we are? or that the laws by which His nature are governed are directly the reverse of those which He has imprinted in our souls? "God is so great!" say some; and they hold up that greatness—sincerely desiring to show forth His praise, though mistaken in the thing wherein lies His greatest glory—till they seat him on a throne *so* high that no man can touch even its base, till they cut Him entirely off from man's sympathy. They say He might have justly let the world alone, after its revolt, and have concerned Himself no more about it; and they declare the love and mercy which refused to do so, past finding out—a mystery of love at which mortals should for ever wonder and adore. Yes, He might have let His rebels alone, in such a way that there would have been no propagation of the condemned and hopeless race; but that He did *not* do this, can any heart that is

a parent's marvel? Man *can* understand God, when God has given, in his own breast, the key which can unlock His mysteries—*made in the image of God.*

God is great! but in proportion to His greatness is His love, and His obligation to do good. No being in the wide universe is so marked out and belted around with "ought"—with obligations to rectitude, as is the Almighty.

Because He is mighty and high is not the reason why He has a right to make conditions, and mark out the bounds of men—but because His wisdom and His goodness are so great. It is for *their own sake*, as well as for His, that God would have men serve Him; for all good and all happiness are inevitably connected with His service. This is in the nature of things. He loves every one of us with a warmer and heartier love than that which it is possible for the fondest of our human friends to feel for us; and all His desires and all His commands are for our eternal good. His help is so often promised that men have got an idea that it is some nearly impossible thing one has to do in order to become a Christian; but this is wrong. The help that we need is already with each one of us. In every man's hand God hath put a price with which to get wisdom, and if he does not obtain it, he will have none but himself to blame We are asked to do nothing but what we can do, and do do every day, only not towards God. Who does not often feel the sense of guilt? Who is there that has not often regretted a wrong act? Who is there that has not faith in things unseen? Who is there that has no power to love that which is lovely?

My hearers, if it should be that any of you stand unfriended at the judgment, unclothed and shivering before the Judge, it will not be His voice alone that you will hear pronouncing sentence against you. Your own understanding, your own conscience and social affections, even your own worldly wisdom, will cry out that your ruin was needless, that it was only because you would not that you was not saved.

THE more refined and elevated men are, the more sensitive are they—the more is expected from them. A thing that you would pass without notice in a low, ignorant person, you would expect and demand apology for in a person higher on the social plane. Man, as well as God, exacts from man according to that which he hath.

THE present time with men is as the sight of a rifle: they look through it to see what is before them.

CHANGES of motive and purpose are often instantaneous; but it may take years to get all the conduct in exact agreement with that changed mind. Suppose that the men on board a pirate vessel began to falter in their purpose, and to talk to each other about becoming honest seamen. By and by, having consulted all but the captain, they conclude to refer the whole matter to him; and if he consents, they will all abandon the life of pirates.

They surround their captain, and make known to him their thoughts. "The whole thing depends on you, captain —what do you say?"

The captain thinks and thinks—he shakes his head: "I don't know, boys, about this. If we begin to be honest men, we must hold out so; and perhaps we can't. And then we may get caught and punished for what we *have* done. Still I don't know. I guess we will give up this way of life—we —I suppose we *had* better decide to do so—we *will*."

It was done. At that instant the men had ceased to be pirates. True, the black flag still swung from their mast; the last blood was hardly washed from their decks; they had been fitted out to attack and plunder the West Indian Islands; and they were still full of the implements of death. But no matter, they were no longer pirates, any more than when they had pulled down the flag, cast away their weapons, and entered upon their lawful voyage.

THE Lord's Prayer stops at "deliver us from evil." The doxology, though excellent, is generally admitted to be an interpolation. Who may pray? May the Christian?—certainly. It has been considered that prayer was a privilege peculiarly that of the saint. This is an error. *Whoever has a want* may pray. Has not the man in the fire or in the flood a right to cry out for help, regardless of his character? What! may the *sinner* address God? Well, if "the sinner" may not, *who* in this wide world may? But "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," says Scripture. That passage has been wrested till it has been made the means of the loss of many souls; it has gone up and down the earth, destroying like a sword. It is the *hypocritical* sacrifice that God abhors. No *earnest* heart-sent cry is displeasing to Him. When a man who would twist his neigh-

bour's neck for gain, or who for it would thrust his arm up to the shoulder in blood, who loves and means to continue in the indulgence of riot, uncleanliness, and wassail, makes his sacrifice, or offers his prayer for the sake of covering his real character; or, saying in his heart, "There! I hope that's enough to keep me safe"—*that* is the abomination of which the Bible speaks.

How should men pray? If any man can best approach God, and open his heart to Him by means of pre-arranged prayers, in God's name, allow him to use them. But the spontaneous utterance of thought, feeling, and desire, is best suited for specific cases. Printed prayers are generic.

By His conduct and His relations Christ taught that it was God's pleasure to be *taken firm hold of* by the soul in prayer. He taught us plainly that there are some things which He will give to His children if they will plead for them long enough, and with sufficient intensity of desire, and which *otherwise* they shall not have. He enjoined it upon us that in prayer we should be, *to the last degree*, earnest, constant, and importunate. But God wants no man to make watch-preparation for communion with Him. Don't look at your watch, and say, "It's noon, or it's six o'clock, I must go and pray"—whether you've anything to say or not. Some men pray three times a-day; they have three regular hours. If this suits their case, let them do it. Others pray regular oral prayers but once a-day. There are some birds that sing when the sun rises, and then they are done for that day. All Christians ought to be much in prayer. They should even in secret pray with the voice, for the voice helps to fix the thoughts; and no man will ever grow much in the grace of praying who prays in his heart *only*. Social prayer also is a duty and a benefit to the Christian; but above all things, let them strive to be sincere, simple, and natural in prayer. Faults of manner in addressing God are not confined to young converts—if so, there would be more prospect of having them all corrected. The young should beware of falling into these faults. Don't allow yourself to have a praying tone, one much higher or lower than that which is natural to you. The moment I hear a man go up or down an octave in his voice, I am left an octave behind. Then some men's voices have a roll, they have a swinging undulation like the waves of the sea. All this is very unpleasant—even revolting to refined taste.

When young Christians complain to me that their thoughts

wander in their devotions, I tell them that they pray too much. Pray often, *but not* too long at a time. I have heard very stammering, staggering prayers—prayers that broke down in the middle, that were yet real, living prayers. Far better are such than those whose composition is perfect, but in which words have outrun feeling. All the first troubles in regard to this intercourse and confidence with God, will pass, and, by and by, the Christian who really desires it, will come to live, as it were, in a perpetual prayer. He will walk through the days with a consciousness that He *is* "naked and open before Him with whom he has to do," and he will rejoice in that consciousness. Every new event, every new emotion of his life will be with him an impulse towards God. He must tell it there. His confidences and his warmest gushes of feeling are continually lifting themselves up to the Being of his supreme love and reverence; and *this* is to "pray without ceasing." When the heart of man attains unto this state, he can no more be left comfortless or alone, though the grave hide all who love him, and though a dungeon shut him from the light of day.

You will frequently need some preparation for prayer. When a man is full of the fretting cares of business; sore, smarting, tormented by the untoward events of the day, he often feels that he is in an unfit state to enjoy communion with his Maker. The mind needs some relief before it can settle itself to prayer. With me music is one of the best aids here. One deep and solemn strain of music is enough to separate as far between me and any past state of mind, as the Red Sea separated between Pharaoh and the Israelites.

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* O God! we know not what life in heaven is; nor what disposition is made of occupation there; but we know that whatever *here* is most bright, whatever is most beautiful and lovely, whatever is most delightful in experience and most pleasing in sensation, is used to excite our imagination of the joys that await Thy children, and that after all these things are exhausted we are told that it doth not *yet* appear what we shall be.

How long, O Lord! how long? Since Thou wentest up into heaven, hast Thou forgotten the earth?

* The following passages are from prayers by Mr. Beecher

Givest Thou no more heed to the voice of her groaning? For eighteen hundred years, since Thy departure, she has swung round about Thy throne, uttering evermore her cries of bitterness and pain. Is it not enough? Oh, hear the wail of nature, and come, Lord Jesus, come *quickly!*

Thy coming, and that alone, can redeem us. And when Thou art here, the waters of bitterness will all be turned to sweetness; and the song of earth, as she swings in her orbit, shall be like the melody of heaven.

Our Father, we love Thee, though we so often grieve Thee. Our God, our Saviour, we desire to walk in Thy love; why *do* our feet so constantly falter?

Oh, come unto us, and possess us in every faculty of our souls! *Abide* with us, thou Heavenly Guest, and so draw us that we turn from Thee no more.

When we look abroad into the world, and see what a place it is; see how full it is of jangling and selfishness; of violence, of passion, and blood; Thy Fatherhood, and our brotherhood unacknowledged, and men everywhere at strife. And when we look *within*, and see the evil there: the lurking enemies crouching in secret places, waiting for us to lie down in slumber, or to ungird our armour for a moment's rest, that they may spring out and assassinate us, we are ready to sink down in despair, and cry out that all is lost, and that Thou hast indeed forsaken us. But we know that Thou art not gone—that Thou art *not* afar off, and that Thou dost regard the cry of Thy children.

Then, hear us now, O God! while we reach out after Thee, and are sick for want of Thee. Come unto us with healing, and speak comfortable things unto us, and hasten the salvation of the world.

When the clouds are over us so black that those who know Thee not, see in them only wrath and destruction, may we, looking up, behold and know that Thou art near, and that we are only standing in the twilight of the shadow of our God.

May we be over-arched by our faith in Thee; may we stand under it as our shadow and protection from all the storms, and sins, and woes of life.

While we walk through the places of crucifixion here, may the thought of our Father's home sustain us.

Is our home indeed awaiting us? *Art* Thou looking upon us with yearning, and thinking that the time draws near when Thou mayest call us to Thine arms? *Dost* Thou love us, and long for us, O our God!—for *us*, so full of all unquietness and uncleanness, so barren of all loveliness.

Oh, teach us the meaning of that word "Love!" Teach us, too, that with Thee it means not less, but more, than it does in the truest and warmest heart; that our love is as the brook, shallow and defiled, while Thine is as the ocean flowing to meet the brook, and swallowing up all its impurity as though it had not been.

May the thought of Thy tenderness and pity give us courage. May it not encourage us to think sin less dreadful, but cause us to hate and shun it more, and yet, in spite of all our oft falling and failing, to take comfort in Thee, and to struggle, not from fear, and to escape Thy frown, but with a great yearning to get upward, nearer and nearer to Thy smile.

May the thought of Thy love make sin more hateful and fearful to us than all the thunderings of conscience ever did; and may it look even blacker while we feel the throbbings of Thy Divine pity, than when viewed in the light of Thy pure and perfect law.

Our Father, may grieving Thee be the one terror of our lives. Teach us *how* to love each other, and how, hating all sin, to have mercy on the sinner, even as Thou dost. Look not upon our sins, nor enter into judgment against us, for which of us could stand one moment before Thee?

When we are alone and desolate, forsaken of all that makes life dear, be not Thou afar off. Be near us, O Thou who canst make Thyself so much more unto us than parents, or brother, or sister, or husband, or wife, or lover, or friend; for these are but sparks struck out from Thee. They are only names, which, gathered and grouped together, mean God.

To trust in human love is often to be pierced as with thorns; to lean on human faithfulness is to feel the broken shaft enter our side: but no man ever trusted in Thy love, and found it grow cold towards him; no heart ever yearned towards Thee, and stayed itself upon Thee, and found Thee unfaithful or unkind.

We pray Thee that Thou wilt give us grace to bear with

the troubles that are in our daily life. What are we, that we should ask to go crowned with joy when all through the world there is so much sorrow? We pray Thee not so much to take away our burdens, not so much to lift from us the cross, or to pluck away the thorns, as to show us how patiently and lovingly to bear them.

Our days are passing: O God! that dwellest where they sing who have done with weeping—they whom we buried with tears and anguish, but whom Thou didst raise again with gladness and everlasting exultation, and hast given them so much more and better than we, in our largest and most ardent desires, know how to ask for them, that they, looking down from their glorious exaltation, see immeasurably below them the *dust* that we have named as blessings—when it shall be our turn to hear that call which men name "death," may we, waking as children called by mother's voice at morning, see bending above us Thy face of eternal beauty and infinite love, and feel beneath us Thine everlasting arms, and break into the first notes of that rapturous song which shall not cease, with our head upon Thy bosom.

Be with and bless our friends, wherever they are. Scattered abroad in the earth, they are toiling, each with his duties, and his burdens, and his wearing sorrows. *We* would fain gather them in the bosom of our love, O Lord! and there shelter and give them consolation; but it cannot be; for our hearts are filled with their own burdens and sorrows, and they are powerless to bear even these alone—how then shall we help our brothers? But what is *our* love and pity when compared with thine? And are they not all beneath the shadow, nay, in the sunshine, of Thy care? and canst Thou, without whom not a sparrow's strength faileth, permit any heart that stays itself on Thee to be broken by its trouble? Thou wilt *never* leave us nor forsake us; and they that are ours by love are parts of our own soul, and the promise and the covenant is for them also. Therefore, O our God, we commit those united to us, yet by space divided from us, into Thy faithful and tender keeping, and we *know* that they are safe.

* Our souls rejoice, O Thou blessed One! when we feel ourselves drawn towards Thee, for it is not in *us* to rise; and

* A prayer from a phonographic report in the *American Pulpit*, by Prof. Henry Fowler.

when our thoughts are all tending with sweet affection towards heaven, we know that there have been solicitations, and that God hath yearned for us, and hath sent forth ministering influences to waken love, and lift our souls towards Him. And as the sun doth draw up all vapours, and wreath the mountain-tops therewith, so in Thy high and holy place, yea, towards Mount Zion above, Thou, with sweet and blessed looking, dost draw our affections, and our hearts to-day exhale towards Thee.

For though we have not seen Thee, we *know* Thee, Thou mighty One! Though we have never beheld Thee in outward form and guise, our hearts have taken hold upon Thee.

The hand that was pierced for us hath never been laid upon us in our path; nor have those sacred wounded feet crossed our threshold; but that heart, that mind of Thine, the *soul of God*, hath crossed the threshold of our dwellings, and with our hearts, full often, we have had communion with Thee, as friend with friend.

And in the times of darkness, and of temptation, we have wrestled with Thee, even as the Patriarch of old, and Thou hast given us victories, which the tongue may not mention, but which the heart will think of with joy and everlasting gratitude.

In times when affliction seemed to dissolve us—when our heart was as fruit about to drop from the bough—when there was no more strength by which to lay hold upon life, Thou hast come, Thou blessed One! and given us strength again to lay hold on life, and to be happy in life, and to rise above the darkness of personal distress, and the struggle and the conflict of immingled evils. We have been fearful of dangers; but afterwards Thou hast made us to laugh, as children laugh when alarmed, and then looking back, see that it was but the shaking of a leaf. And when things have seemed to settle around us in darkness, and troubles have come thick upon us, Thou hast lifted us up, and our feet upon a rock, where no tide could reach us, and no wave could dash against us, and no flood could sweep with destroying eddies about us, to unsettle our peace, or do us harm in thought or feeling.

And we have been made masters that before were servants to our circumstances. We have been able to stand undaunted and to beat back troubles that came upon us. Thou hast lifted us up from sorrows, from violence, from unexpected

evil. When periods of dismay have come drifting in upon us like diffused mist, cold and chill—those days of doubt when we could see nothing, when the pall of silence lay upon everything, then, likewise, thou hast manifested Thyself unto us. Thou hast given us, at last, a sweet patience to stand still, *and to wait;* and we have found that waiting by Thy side is better than running alone; and that to be empty and weak for Christ's sake, is better than to be full for our own sake.

We rejoice that Thou hast, in a thousand ways, manifested Thyself to us in all the desires and yearnings of our hearts. We have looked out upon life sometimes with joy, and then with a sweet sadness, because, after all, there was so little in it that its brightness grew dim almost before it flashed its brightness forth; and we have been glad of it.

We thank Thee that Thou hast addressed thyself to us by our nobler thoughts, and redeemed the world from emptiness, and given it back to us when we have yielded it to Thee, crowned and glorified. Thou hast made the things that are round about us—the very flowers that perish—the leaves that wither and drop away, the changes of the season—to be Thy teachers and Thy preachers to our souls.

But these things alone do not content us; for they are things of the lower life, and we have yearned for that which we have not. We have had divine incitements; we have had blessed inspirations; when all that we knew seemed so fragmentary, and all that we *were* so exceedingly little and less than fragmentary; when we have felt that our affections were so cold and ignoble; when from a thought of our ungratefulness, and selfishness, and pride, we have turned to the bright vision of Thy love—so sweet, so lasting, so deep, so gentle, so delicate beyond all expression from human tongue; when we have seemed to ourselves to be so coarse, so low, so ignoble, that we scarcely could lift up our eyes unto Thee. But Thou, O Blessed One! hast been pleased to look upon us out of the brightness and radiance of Thine own perfections. Out of the depth and purity and sweetness of thine own love, Thou hast looked forgivingly upon our rudeness, and our hollowness, our pride, our selfishness, our jealousy; and hast uttered to our souls promises that we should not always be thus—*that if we would have faith Thou wouldst have patience;* and that Thou wouldst bring us onward and upward, step by step, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Lord Jesus, Thou wilt not forsake one word Thou hast ever uttered. Thou wilt not betray one single hope or expectation in our hearts which Thou hast ever suggested; and all which Thou hast promised Thou wilt not only do, but exceeding abundantly more. Thou wilt outrun our most fruitful conceptions; Thou wilt be more gentle than our heart has felt in its most raptured moments; Thou wilt be more patient than our utmost conceptions of patience; Thou wilt be more full of love and goodness than our loftiest aspirations.

We rejoice that there is in Thee such infinite goodness, and such height, and length, and breadth, and depth of mercy.

Still, we are not *willing* to be sinful, or low, or ignorant, or poor, because of Thy goodness; though we have a strange wonder of gladness that we are weak, because it sets forth to us such glories in Thee, thou nourishing God! patient with us as a nurse is patient with her children!

Yea, Thou hast Thyself declared that the mother shall forget her nursing child sooner than Thou wilt forget those whom Thou dost love. We take the promise that is in Thy declarations, and we set it against the darkness of time and trouble, and weighing down of heart and sadness, and we lift ourselves by this Divine help above them all. When we stand under the darkest cloud, we see the bow of promise, and we know that God will not suffer the soul that loves Him to be overwhelmed by any deluge.

And now may we have these bright days more frequently, so that their shining may cast a twilight into the dark days that intervene. As they that watch in the night shall behold the glowing light of morning reaching up the hillsides, mounting the highest cliffs, and coming down into the valleys beyond, so mayest Thou who watchest for us, see that the light of hope and the glory of God is more and more perfectly enwrapping our whole experience. For it is Thy work, blessed Saviour; we are being fashioned by Thy hand, and for Thy sake, as well as for our own. Thou art yet to present us spotless before the throne of Thy Father, and heaven is to resound with acclamations for our sake, and for Thy sake.

Thou, Lord Jesus! Thou who art mighty over all things, and with whom we are fellow-heirs, we rejoice that in all the things that we ask for ourselves there is also Thine own interest, and Thine own glory and joy, enwrapped!

Now, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt speak peaceably unto every heart in Thy presence this morning, according to our various necessity. If there be those here that do not know their own trouble, but only know that they *are* troubled—*Thou knowest*, and Thou canst enter in, and make the darkest chamber of their heart serene with light and peace. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt sustain those who are bearing the pressure of affliction. Thou thyself didst bear affliction for them. Thou wert *acquainted* with grief. And may they look up, while their tears flow, into the face of Him who wept, who lived, who suffered, who died for them and for their consolation.

Grant thy blessings to those who are suffering the bafflings and trials of poverty. Lord, are they poorer than Thou wert, who hadst not where to lay Thy head? Yet, so far as is consistent with their good, alleviate their trouble; raise them up friends and comforts of life.

Bless all those that are tried in their worldly affairs; who, whatever way they turn, find fears prevailing. Will the Lord be gracious unto them that they may not think their life consisteth in the abundance of the things which they possess? May they feel that the things of this life, and all the troubles that harass it, pass quickly away; and may they also feel that they are not in any wise ruined, or overturned. May they lay up their treasures where no misfortunes may ever assail. May they believe in Him who is rich beyond all bankruptcy. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt be very near to all that are in doubt of mind, and are perplexed in their thoughts and belief of things religious. Do Thou teach them the greatest of all truth—how *to love God*, and how to diffuse that love upon men. And may they, at last, find encouragement in this, that Thou art their God.

We beseech of Thee, that to all those who are in the trust of this life's prosperities, who are surrounded with friends and comforts, and who have been blessed abundantly, Thou wilt grant humility, that they may not become proud, nor hard and unfeeling towards those who are less successful and skilful than they; and by so much as they are above them may they see to it not only that they use their goods, but also their hearts and minds, for the benefit of their fellow-men.

Be near to strangers in our midst, whose hearts yearn for those who have been wont to worship with them. Will the Lord bring them by faith very near? And as they meet at

the foot of the cross, may they consciously be united to all who love the Lord Jesus, and whom they love.

Diffuse the blessings of the Gospel over all the earth. May slavery cease; may war cease; may intemperance cease; may justice reign, and *love* upon justice; and may the whole earth be filled with the glory of God! We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

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